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The Public Library Association is a division of the American Library Association,
50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; www.pla.org.
Cover design by Jim Lange, Jim Lange Design, Chicago
Interior design by Dianne M. Rooney, American Library Association, Chicago
¡Gracias!

I would like to acknowledge the importance of articles such as “Collections and Services for the Spanish Speaking” by Solina Kasten Marquis (March/April issue of Public Libraries). The article provides a good overview of library and information services to the Latino and Spanish-speaking. As the Latino population has become the largest minority population in the United States, it is imperative that research about Latinos be supported through its publication. More important, it is critical for our library profession to support research and articles on how to promote and provide better library services and collections to this large Latino and Spanish-speaking population. I would like to commend Public Libraries for featuring this two-part series this year. Public librarians throughout the country will benefit from having this research readily available to them. Thank you.—Ben Ocón, REFORMA President, 2002-03

Solina Marquis’s article on collection development for Spanish speakers (“Collections and Services for the Spanish-Speaking: Issues and Resources”), published in the March/April issue of Public Libraries, is indeed excellent. Last week I was a speaker at the Long Island Library Conference and cited this article several times. I also got permission from PLA and had the article distributed to the more than one hundred librarians who attended the program. Librarians all over the country are clamoring for this kind of information. Keep up the good work!—Adriana Acauan Tandler, Head, New Americans Program, Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica, New York

In Our Next Issue . . .

Bridging the Value Gap: Getting Past Professional Values to Customer Value in the Public Library
Lifescapes: A Writing/Reading Program for Senior Citizens
What Goes Around: Telephone Reference Rotary Wheels
The Fragile Future of Public Libraries
Extra! Extra! Read All About It! Fundamentals of Good Library Press Releases

Plus . . .

Content Management and Library Web Sites
Deinstitutionalization of People with Mental Illness: Challenges and Solutions
Understanding and Promoting Fair Use
Interview with author Chris Bojhalian

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (ISSN 0163-5506) is published bimonthly at 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. It is the official publication of the Public Library Association, a division of the American Library Association. Subscription price: to members of PLA, $25 a year, included in membership dues; to nonmembers: U.S. $50; Canada $60; all other countries $60. Single copies, $10. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Public Libraries, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Nonmember subscriptions, orders, changes of address, and inquiries should be sent to Public Libraries, Subscription Department, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; 800-545-2433, press 5; fax: (312) 944-2641; e-mail: subscriptions@ala.org.

ADVERTISING
William N. Coffee, c/o Benson, Coffee & Associates, 1411 Peterson Ave., Park Ridge, IL 60068; (847) 692-4693; fax: (847) 692-3877.

PRODUCTION
ALA PRODUCTION SERVICES: Troy D. Linker, Kevin Heubusch; Ellie Barta-Moran, Angela Hanshaw, Kristen McKulski, and Karen Sheets.

MANUSCRIPTS
Unless otherwise noted, all submissions should be sent to the feature editor, Renée Vaillancourt McGrath, 248A N. Higgins Ave. #145, Missoula, MT 59802; publiclibraries@aol.com. See the January/February issue or www.pla.org for submission instructions.

INDEXING/ABSTRACTING
Public Libraries is indexed in Library Literature and Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE), in addition to a number of online services. Contents are abstracted in Library and Information Science Abstracts.

MICROFILM COPIES
Microfilm copies are available from University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

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I attended my first ALA conference as a library school student in 1993. I only knew one person (my roommate, Alice Hagemeyer, who helped raise funds for me to attend the conference as a representative of Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action). Alice is deaf, but not shy. Accompanying her to the conference often meant serving as an ad hoc interpreter, which forced me to talk to people that I didn’t know. This was a good experience for me, since although I’m not deaf, I am shy.

At subsequent conferences, which I attended on my own, I always brought a book with me, so that if I found myself sitting alone, I would look like I was doing something other than sitting around, hoping that someone would talk to me. Although I desperately wanted to meet and talk to other librarians, I didn’t want anyone to know that I didn’t know anyone. Of course, the book made it look like I didn’t want to talk, so it took me a long time to make friends in the library world.

Myers-Briggs studies have shown that although 75 percent of the general population is extroverted, most librarians are introverts, so I know I’m not alone.1 But several years ago I had an experience that radically changed my approach to conference attendance and participation. I was at an OPAC system training, there was a shuttle from the hotel to the training site, and several librarians were riding on it the first day of the training.

In walked one of the minority extroverts in the library world. He was a friendly Hawaiian, smiling and talking to everyone. “Where are you from?” he’d ask. “What kind of a library do you work in?” I hunched lower in my seat and tried to avoid eye contact. But he was persistent. Eventually, he addressed me directly, and I responded politely, to avoid being rude. We wound up sitting next to each other at the first training session, and by the end of a few days, we were friends.

On the flight home, I thought about what had happened, how much I had resisted getting to know someone who I came to like very much. I thought about my new friend, Keawe Vredenberg, and the way that he approached the world, as though every stranger were a potential friend. And although I had to step way outside of my comfort zone, I struck up a conversation with the person sitting next to me on the plane.

I try to think of Keawe whenever I travel to conferences now. I no longer carry a book with me to sessions or try to avoid eye contact as much as possible. It’s gotten a lot easier at ALA and PLA since I’ve gotten to know so many people in the ten years that I’ve been attending conferences. But I recently attended my first ACRL conference, and I found myself back in the position of knowing almost no one.

It reminded me that although I have become more comfortable in most library conference settings, there are always other people out there who still feel the way that I used to. And though it still doesn’t come naturally to me, I try to remember to reach out to them, in the way that Keawe reached out to me.

I have been receiving a lot of manuscripts lately about early-career librarians (see “Experiences of Early-Career Public Library Directors” by Mary Pergander in this issue). As our profession ages, it is increasingly important to welcome new, younger librarians to our ranks. If you are a librarian who is new to conference attendance, being open and receptive to conversation (as well as initiating it yourself) will help you to become assimilated a lot more quickly than I did.

Editing can be lonely work, and I am grateful for the opportunities that I have to travel to conferences, to meet other librarians, and to learn about all of the exciting things that are going on in public libraries across the United States and the world. I am also grateful for the many chance meetings at library conferences that have developed into full-fledged friendships.

I’ve kept in touch with Keawe, mostly via e-mail. When he was travelling through Montana a few years back, he stopped by my house to visit. So when I found out that my husband would be doing a timber-framing job in Hawaii last year, Keawe was the first person I called. He recommended hotels and things to do on the islands and took me to visit libraries and the library and information science program at the University of Hawaii while we were there. He also introduced me to more new people and taught me a lot about Hawaiian culture.

It is a Hawaiian tradition to travel with gifts so that if you meet someone on your travels you will have something to offer them. Keawe offered me much more than the box of chocolate-covered macadamia nuts that he gave me at the end of our OPAC conference. And I know that his gift of friendship will keep on giving as I continue to push past my shyness to meet new people in the library world. So if you see me at a conference, feel free to stop by and say, “Hi.” I just may greet you, first.

Reference

Just my luck—I begin my term as PLA president during another period of economic recession, funding uncertainties, and turbulent times. It seems like the same thing was happening exactly ten years ago during my term as president of the California Library Association.

In 1993 California was in the midst of one of the most severe economic depressions of the times and libraries throughout the state were reducing hours, services, and, of course, staffing. This was happening at a time when PLA leaders were planning for the state conference, yet the big questions were “What for? Who would want to go? Why would it matter?” Our theme “Open Libraries, Open Minds” was intended to convey the value of libraries at a time when funding competition was at an all-time high. I worried about members opting out of attending and the impact this would have on the future of our chapter. However, as it turned out, it was a pivotal time for all who attended. Creative ideas surfaced on ways to meet the challenges. The conference served to galvanize and reenergize the California library community into looking at long-term strategies for funding. It also reignited our passion and commitment, and we returned to the home front to tell our story and rally support.

The year 2003 will bring similar challenges to PLA and our public libraries. We are braced for a period of uncertainty that will require strong leadership from the library community. Indeed, I believe that it is more important to lead during the difficult times than during the good times.

How can we be effective leaders? For one, we can utilize the personal touch and become more attentive to staff and user needs. We can make the attempt to understand and empathize with staff and what they may be going through in terms of anxiety over staff reductions, heavier workloads, and increased responsibilities. Difficult economic times also manifest in an increase of stressed patrons and demanding constituencies. Communication is perhaps most critical during these times. Be honest with staff about the potential impact of service and funding cuts. Talk openly about what your expectations are during these trying times, and above all, treat people with dignity and respect.

This is also one of the most compelling times to promote the importance of libraries. Competition with other public sector agencies and nonprofits is tough due to the post–September 11, 2001, impact on private giving. Now is the time to meet the challenge through a strong message about the role that libraries play in the economic well-being of our communities. Now is the time to talk about how library partnerships in education can make a difference through an information-literate community. And finally, during times when challenges to open access and privacy are great, now is the time to advocate and support the core principles that make libraries unique democratic institutions.

PLA is poised to carry out its strategic plan. Its focus on advocacy and recognition, a literate nation, staffing and recruitment, and training and knowledge transfer are the antidote for these difficult times. More than ever, we need to stay the course and not waver in our commitment to lead through the tough times ahead.

I am proud to serve as president of our association and thank you for your support and commitment to PLA. As I think about the future, I look forward to the challenges and opportunities that await, knowing that by working together we can attain PLA’s mission to advance public libraries.

Leading in Tough Times

Luis Herrera

2004

January 9–14
ALA Midwinter Meeting
San Diego, Calif.

February 24–28
PLA 2004 National Conference
Seattle

June 24–30
ALA Annual Conference
Orlando, Fl.
Saluting Secretaries with a Tribute to One of Their Own

Betty Evans and Ann Fuhrman

Secretaries are seldom recognized for the work they provide. This article pays tribute to secretaries everywhere through the story of one of their own who was largely responsible for the success of the public library movement in the United States.

In virtually all organizations—libraries being no exception—there are secretaries defined as “support” or “administrative” or “professional” staff, diligently working behind the scenes to meet the aims and objectives set by the organization’s mission and supporting in every imaginable way those overseeing that mission. These secretaries are seldom in the limelight, and their names rarely appear on buildings, memorials, or tributes, but the very essence of their work affects the achievements of their organizations. Their contributions are often taken for granted or overlooked because we expect them to be there, to do what they do without much too complaining or grousing, and in addition, to be reliable, trustworthy, discreet, efficient, loyal, all-knowing, and long-suffering! In honor of administrative professionals, we celebrate a secretary to whom public librarians everywhere owe a monumental debt—James Bertram.

While many of us are familiar with the name of Andrew Carnegie, and more than a few of us have worked or still work in a library funded by his money, we do not necessarily recognize the name James Bertram as anyone we should be aware of, much less appreciate. While the money and idea for building libraries were Andrew Carnegie’s, it was Bertram—Andrew Carnegie’s private secretary—who was largely responsible for the overwhelming success of his library philanthropy.

Bertram held various jobs prior to being Carnegie’s private secretary, and they were no doubt positions of some responsibility, but there does not appear to be anything in them that would prepare Bertram to help distribute a rich man’s fortune, nor does there appear to be anything in his background, other than having been a keen student, to give him any specific knowledge of libraries. However, he would become the most important individual, other than Andrew Carnegie himself, in what has been called “the most influential philanthropic program in American history.”

In his responsibilities as Carnegie’s private secretary, Bertram dealt with correspondence appealing for a share of Carnegie’s fortune. Carnegie had begun giving money for libraries before hiring Bertram in 1897, but there was no system in place; in fact, the distribution of money was described as both “haphazard” and in “chaos.” Carnegie, with his secretary’s help, established clear-cut policies for the library program, which then allowed him to turn over the drudgery of the paperwork to Bertram—and there was mounds of it! He was “in charge of the day-to-day operations of the benefactions and in a sense the real power behind them” and Carnegie, by his own admission, saw few of the letters, which Bertram read, answered, and filed. This was an enormous responsibility because, according to Bertram’s biographer, “in the usual office routine, two or three thousand letters arrived each day.” While it is likely that this figure is slightly exaggerated, when the Carnegie Corporation archived the correspondence, there were thirty-nine reels of 16mm microfilm. Many of the letters are not only handwritten, but written in various elaborate styles of cursive not easily deciphered.

Bear in mind that Bertram was keeping track of the correspondence without the aid of sophisticated modern technology that, in theory anyway, makes our working lives so much more efficient and productive. The figures are quite stunning: beginning in 1886, Carnegie “spent $36 million to create 1,681 public libraries in nearly as many U.S. communities and 828 libraries in other parts of the English-speaking world.” Needless to say, there was not a single building erected as a result of just one simple exchange of correspondence; and while some transactions were less complicated than others, and some proposals never came to fruition, the public library movement in the United States owes a great deal to the work ethic and conscientiousness of Bertram. Imagine overseeing, processing, and reviewing the various aspects of a project of those dimensions without the use of word processing, spreadsheets, e-mail, or even Post-it notes!

The system had to be easily and fairly administered, without constantly bothering Carnegie with the details. The guidelines for the program were simple: “To be eligible a community had to demonstrate the need for a public library, provide the building site, and promise to support library services and maintenance with tax funds equal to ten percent of the grant amount annually.” Bertram devised a system in which he replied to each grant request with a questionnaire (oh yes, even then) that established the needed information: the town’s population; if there was an existing library, and if so, the extent of the collection and the previous year’s circulation statistics, as well as specific information regarding the housing of the library, number of rooms and their uses, and a breakdown of the library’s finances. Finally, and most importantly, the form asked the amount the town council was willing and legally able to pledge for annual maintenance if they should receive funding for a library, whether there was a site available, and if any funds had been collected toward the new building. There would be three versions of the questionnaire over the years, not “to make the process more complicated,” as some thought, “but rather to ensure the satisfaction of Carnegie’s intent.” Bertram was a man of few words, but he was willing to modify them if it meant greater specificity and clarity.

Although Bertram was engaged in a philanthropic effort, he was, after all, working for a phenomenally successful businessman; therefore, he was constantly revising the basic format so that the system would be run more like a business, and one of the basic tenets was time management. He learned to carry out his negotiations only with town mayors, councils, or their appointed representatives. This saved him from endlessly having to repeat the same information to literary societies, women’s clubs, civic groups, architects, contractors, local businessmen and politicians, community planners, and other citizens who...
may have heard rumors about a proposed library building.\(^\text{10}\)
Again, there was no blueprint for what Bertram was doing. It was
not as if he could call someone in a similar situation and
ask for advice on how to handle this communications night-
mare. There were no previously established “best practices”
to follow. He was making it up as he went along, and doing so
with the utmost efficiency and effectiveness.

Bertram had an astonishing workload, including the over-
sight of another man’s wealth and responsibility for a project
totally unprecedented in either philanthropy or librarianship.
During what Carnegie described as his whole period of library
giving, 1898–1919,\(^\text{11}\) the average time lapse between an initial
letter of application and the actual approval of the grant was about
a year.\(^\text{12}\) That was only true, of course, for those towns and com-

munities without significant problems. Very often, commu-
nication between Bertram and designated townspeople went on for
years, as was the case in Chardon, Ohio. Bertram received this
small town’s initial application for a Carnegie grant in 1905, and
he continued a committed but futile correspondence with
Chardon officials and citizens until 1922. By that time, rising
building costs and shortages in construction material and labor
due to the war had made the project economically unfeasible—
seventeen years of wasted correspondence.\(^\text{13}\)

While Bertram seldom interfered on the issue of site selec-
tion, except to suggest that the site should be satisfactory to and
owned by the community, there were serious difficulties sur-
rounding other issues, particularly architecture.\(^\text{14}\) At one point
Bertram wrote a memo to Carnegie regarding some architec-
tural extravagances, pointing out that few libraries had been
constructed before 1898, so there were not many experienced library
architects, particularly in smaller and medium-sized
towns. Again, Bertram did not have any training as either an
architect or a librarian, but to make up for his lack of knowl-
edge in those areas he sought advice from professionals. Like
the best of secretaries, he simply did not let any situation intimidate
him. The result of his consultations with his library advisors was
the preparation of a pamphlet called “Notes on the Erection of
Library Buildings,” published by the Carnegie Corporation in
1911 and sent from then on to each community receiving
Carnegie funds. Thus, Bertram turned himself into something of
an expert on the design of small and mid-sized libraries. There
would be six editions of “Notes” over the next several years in
an ongoing attempt to provide certain minimum standards for
the main requirements of Carnegie public library buildings.\(^\text{15}\)

In 1917, partially due to World War I, Carnegie’s public li-

brary funding was halted, but the corporation continued to ful-
fill the program’s promise of money during the 1920s.\(^\text{16}\)
Bertram, having been elected as secretary to the Carnegie Cor-
poration in 1911, continued in that post until his death in
1934. In 1931 the trustees presented him with his director’s
chair, which commemorated twenty years of perfect attendance
at board and executive meetings.\(^\text{17}\) “There is no indication that
Carnegie ever disapproved of his secretary. On the contrary, he
rewarded Bertram with one of two life trusteeships at $5,000
per year in the Carnegie Corporation of New York . . . and pro-
vided him with a $10,000 annuity in his will.”\(^\text{18}\)

Andrew Carnegie is widely credited with seeking out and
motivating men of great talent and ability. Those men aided
him in business, helped make him a millionaire, and helped him
dispose of his millions in an unprecedented act of largess.
Bertram had an incredibly difficult job and no employee man-
ual to guide him. He was treading uncharted waters, with no
training of a specific nature that could help him. To say that he

rose to the occasion would be an understatement. Although still
referred to as “Carnegie libraries” to this day, it was really
James Bertram, private secretary, who administered one of this
country’s most successful philanthropic endeavors.

We salute all of the secretaries who serve us so well, day in,

day out—mostly overworked and underpaid, but not, we hope,
undervalued.
Surviving Your First Year As Library Director

Mary Wilkins Jordan

Well, congratulations! You have just landed your first job as a public library director! Take a few minutes to be proud of yourself, pat yourself on the back, and generally bask in the adulation due you on such a spectacular achievement.

Now, be afraid.

Be very afraid.

Panic should be seeping into your bones.

Try to stop hyperventilating. Come out from under your desk.

It will all be okay. You just need to know a few key points and you will breeze through your first year.

It may even become an enjoyable experience! This could be the most fun, most rewarding, and most terrifying job you will ever have. Relax! Enjoy!

You can never know absolutely everything you will really need to know, but focusing on a few basic ideas will help your first year go more smoothly.

Boards

Okay, this is a biggie. With luck, you will have the chance to speak with the former director and will be filled in on the important things to know about the board members. Further, everyone on your board will be an enthusiastic library supporter (or at least a library user) and positive about making progress toward the future. In addition, they are well trained and desire to know ever more information about their roles and how best to carry out their duties.

It’s nice to hope, but just in case these things do not turn out to be true in your library, it is also nice to have a backup plan.

Often boards, especially in smaller libraries, are made up of good-hearted people who are fuzzy, at best, about what is expected of them. They either ignore you (possibly a blessing) or try to manage every last detail of the library.

But they mean well. Hold onto this idea when things get difficult.

Horror stories abound about boards; I have more than my share of them. But it does not always have to be difficult to work with a library board. You want to establish a good relationship with your board as a group. Show them you are a professional and justify the confidence they have shown in you by hiring you.

Give information freely. Have a folder prepared for each member at meetings, with a few left over for any guests who may attend (this rarely happens, but be prepared). Put in any handout you have—agenda, director’s report, special information, et cetera. I like to give out brightly colored folders (different color each month), so when the trustees take the folder home, before they throw it all into the trash they might just take the time to look at the information.

Have sharp-looking reports for them to read every meeting. People trust information they can hold in their hands. You will always want to give your board a report with all the monthly bills listed, and it would be great if you can also show them the changes to the budget each month. If you do not have anyone to do these for you, QuickBooks or Quicken software programs are pretty easy to use and not terribly expensive. You may also want to give the board a report on circulation (break this down as much as you can or to the extent that they show interest in different areas of the library), and maybe even a door count and a computer-use count. People serving on boards often do not know as much about the library as they could, so do what you can to help them understand what is important!

Respond promptly to any request they make—even if it seems nuts. When they ask things that are actually impossible, gently try to redirect them. But in the end, remember, these people are your bosses and need to be treated as such.

Plan for the meeting as if you were planning a formal social event. Read a few books or articles about it if you are really clueless about how to act (see the sidebar on the next page for a few suggestions). Think, “What would Miss Manners do?”

It is always good to provide snacks and coffee—I like to go with a combination of baked things and a few raw veggies, plus regular and decaf coffee and a few tea bags. This lets them have choices to make—always something to encourage, particularly when the outcome does not matter at all to you or the library. Another easy touch is to give each board member a stack of business cards with their name, title on the board (if any), e-mail address (if any), and the library’s address and phone number. You want them to feel like professionals, in the hope that they will act like professionals.

Talk to other directors in your area about what they do with their boards. Do not be at all concerned about not knowing them yet—librarians are almost always incredibly helpful and willing to impart any of their knowledge to anyone who asks. We have all been in trouble at one time or another, and no matter how hard or weird or shameful your board problems may seem, someone will have suggestions on how to handle the problem.

Another good idea to help ward off future problems is to establish individual relationships with the members. You want to build a few allies you can count on when (not if) problems crop up. You may never be best buddies, but be sure they all know how wonderful you are and make them want to work with you to solve problems. This is another area where some outside reading may come in handy if you are feeling uncertain about how to campaign for your ideas without being too Machiavellian! (See the sidebar on the following page for some suggested resources.) Remember that a board needs a majority to act; individual members cannot act alone. Not everyone needs to love you or to agree with you on any issue—just a majority!
Boards can be challenging, but, with some work, your board can be a useful part of your library!

Community Involvement

A pleasant truth you will come to discover is that everybody likes the library! Even people who do not use your resources will be too embarrassed to say so and will at least pretend to be positive about what you are doing. Your enthusiasm is your springboard into community activities, which can benefit both the community and the library. Offer to go to schools and read books or talk at career days. Join the chamber of commerce or the Rotary or Kiwanis. Get your name out there.

Talk with other nonprofits to see what kind of things you can do for each other. In one of my libraries, I worked out an arrangement with a local VA hospital in which we accepted canned food instead of money for library fines. The food was donated to the VA's homeless shelter. After we held our first book sale, using many books donated by a large local company, we donated the remaining books to the VA's library. In return, they worked with us to send out press releases about how great we were, and they also took a lot of books off our hands that we could not sell and did not want to throw away. With this partnership, we were both better able to serve the community.

This type of involvement will allow you to give more to the community—which you presumably care about or you would not be a library director. They will give you good publicity. And, again looking to minimize future problems, making friends around the community will give you people you can draw on when problems arise.

Grants

This can be your area to shine! Toss aside any silly concerns about asking people for money! Erase any notions you have that others may deserve it more! Revel in your own neediness! If you are in a public library, you need money. Case closed.

Now you are in the proper frame of mind to work on the applications. Particularly for smaller libraries, having extra money, materials, equipment, or programs can make an enormous difference in how well you are able to serve your patrons and the community.

You may not know anything about grants. You may have never even seen a grant application. Fear not! I had zero experience with grants on my first director's job and still managed to bring in more than a quarter of my library's annual budget in grant funds in my first year!

Obviously, the first thing to do is to find the applications. You can start by asking other directors (notice this recurring theme). They can point you to a few grant offerings, and those folks can point you to other grants and other people handing out money. Network! There are a lot of publications listing available grants (see the sidebar on the next page for some suggestions). You can also cruise the Internet for discussion lists and Web sites dealing with grant seeking. You will find a lot of opportunities through these methods. There is money to be had—you just have to work for it.

Many grant applications crop up quickly, so it is a good idea to keep an “idea file.” When you and your staff have great ideas for things you need or want, write them down and collect as much information as you can about what you will need, such as items necessary and prices. This way you can be ready to go when an application finds its way to you.

Do not overlook the obvious tactic of asking local businesses to donate things. Cash is always nice, of course, but many of them can offer other things—office supplies, used books. I received ten computers from a local business that bought new ones and passed the used ones on to us. They were a couple of years old, but still better than what we had, and they dramatically increased our capability to provide good service to the patrons! I also set up an annual donation by a local business of the entire Thomas Register set; they needed the updated material every year, and we were happy to have information a year out of date that was totally free! Businesses probably do not realize they have material we can use, so do not hesitate to ask them!

And do not forget to be thankful to the folks who are passing things out to you. My very best grant story involves a short note telling them how much we all appreciated it. A few months later the woman called me. She said she and her husband sent subscriptions to several libraries, and we were the only ones to send a thank you. Then she told me she and her husband manage a small foundation, and could we use some extra money for anything?

After I picked myself up off the floor, I managed to mention that there were one or two things we could use. She sent us a check for $500, and has sent the library $500 every year since then!

The lesson to remember about grants is that the more people you talk with, the more opportunities come to you, and the more successful you will be in enhancing your library’s ability to serve the public. Your staff, your board, and your community will love you for it!

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Suggested Resources for Planning Meetings


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With grants, like so many other things, take your searching in stages. You may want to start small, then work your way up into the larger grants.

- If your library is part of a system, that will probably be your first stop. These folks may well have some great ideas of where to look for grants and may even be offering grant money to their libraries (a small pool of applicants means you have a better chance!)
- Big companies in your area may also offer grant opportunities. Abbott Labs, Target, and Wal-Mart are just a few of the companies offering money for local literacy projects. Even if the national office seems too large to work with, often contacting the local store manager or the local district manager can help you obtain something (a place to meet, donations of goods to the library, etc.). Be flexible in what you need. Some places that cannot give you cash can give you other valuable resources. Ask!
- Check your state library’s Web site for information on how they distribute the federal grant money they receive. The people who work with the distribution know a lot about grants and can be a great source of assistance.
- Look into grants from your state or local humanities council. Such councils are often on the Web, and they may list several interesting grants for you to explore.
- The Institute for Museum and Library Services has a big grant program going (www.imls.gov/grants). Probably this is not the first place to look for money, unless you are already established or can form good partnerships with a local museum.
- The Grantsmanship Center (www.tgsci.com) is a good place to find some basic contact information for federal, state, and foundation grants applicable to nonprofits (not specifically libraries, but think out of the box!).
- Be thinking of unusual grant opportunities: Paul Newman (www.newmansown.com/5b1_grants.html) provides grants for educational organizations. Consider how to structure your library programs to meet the requirements of these grants—it may be very similar to what you are already doing! The Balance Bar company gives away grants for balancing body and mind (www.balanceoasis.com/grants/rules.asp). Could you team up with a local organization to grab one of these?
- Don’t forget to check your own library catalog and the catalog of any university near you. You may be sitting on a treasure trove of resources, and a university library will be very likely to have materials about grants useful to your institution.

Sometimes knowing how to write a grant is more important than knowing where to find one. As you keep talking about grants, more and more opportunities will come to you. But then you need to know what to do. The following Web sites can provide you with some more information.

- The Foundation Center, http://fdncenter.org. This site provides a lot of great information for grant seekers, including a short, easy-to-follow course in writing grants.
- The Association of Fundraising Professionals. www.afpnet.org. This may be too advanced for a beginner to join, but certainly any information on what to do will be helpful to you. You do not need to be a member to read information from their site.

This is the key element to making your library successful. If your staff performs well, everything else will follow. You need to begin team building right away. If you are new to the library, it will be a struggle first just to learn everyone’s names, but the results you can accomplish with motivated employees will be worth the effort.

Meet with each member of the staff individually soon after starting your job (managers only at first, if you have a large staff). Bring them in to discuss the responsibilities they have handled, the things they do that they most enjoy, and the things they most hate. Get a feel for where they fit into the organization, both their official roles and their unofficial roles. Close by discussing some of their own goals for the library and for themselves in the library.

A few people will have ideas about things they want to accomplish. They will know there is an underserved area they can take care of or a need they can fill. They will have something they have always wanted to try in the library. They will be eager to assist with planning, and you will observe them encouraging their peers and leading other staff members. Hang on to these people! They are your leaders, and they are worth their weight in gold. Their job titles do not matter as much as their willingness to be your ambassadors in carrying out your plans. Your best hope for success is to encourage these people and to provide them with the support and training they need to be successful in helping the library move forward.

Maybe the most important thing you can provide for your staff is too often overlooked—training. Stop your groaning—training can be fun! If you have a small staff, it is likely everyone is familiar with each other and every other job. A larger staff can easily disintegrate into an “us vs. them” mentality, with one group never really understanding what other groups do. Basic cross training between departments will help everyone provide better overall customer service. Also, ensuring each department clearly understands the best practices in their department and carries them out is crucial.

Another important benefit of all-over training is that every level of staff feels appreciated. Too often professionals are sent to conferences and given training as the budget allows, but money and time run out before trickling to the lower-level folks. Remember that you depend on pages as well as MLS librarians. Give everyone training and make it meaningful to

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Commission. through the Nebraska Library grant programs available eligible for state aid and other Libraries that meet the basic which define a basic level of public libraries are due to September 30 of the third three-year period, from Octo- Nebraska are accredited for a library Accreditation program to help public libraries grow using the Public Li- brary Accreditation program in Nebraska libraries meet ka. “We are dedicated to help public libraries across Nebras- kara. "We are dedicated to help public libraries across Nebras- kans’ information needs, opening up the world of information for citizens of all ages. The Library Commis- sion continues to work in partnership with Nebraska li- braries using the Public Lib- rary Accreditation program to help public libraries grow and develop,” Wagner stated.

Public libraries in Ne- braska are accredited for a three-year period, from Octo- ber 1 of the first year through September 30 of the third year. Roughly one-third of public libraries are due to renew their accreditation each year. Accredited libraries must meet twenty basic guidelines, which define a basic level of library services for the state. Libraries that meet the basic guidelines are accredited and eligible for state aid and other grant programs available through the Nebraska Library Commission.

To learn more about this process and to see a complete listing of accredited libraries, visit www.nlcl.state.ne.us/libdev/ accreditation/accred_dates.asp.

Simmons, Hampshire Colleges Host Mass. Center for the Book

Simmons College in Boston and Hampshire College in Amherst have joined forces to host the Massachusetts Center for the Book, which pro- motes and celebrates books, reading, and libraries across the commonwealth. The new institutional hosts for the state Center for the Book will work with affiliates across the state to plan and execute creative programs promoting books and book arts that hold a special place in Massa- chusetts literary culture and history.

Affiliate members of the state center, in addition to Simmons and Hampshire col- leges, are the American Anti- quarian Society, the Boston Public Library, the Five Col- leges, Inc., the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissi- oners, and the Massachu- setts Foundation for the Humanities. The center will base its literary and library programming in the offices of the Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences in Boston, the largest library school in New Eng- land. It will locate the Massa- chusetts Book Awards pro- gram and related reading promotion activities at Hamp- shire College, which is also home to the Eric Carle Muse- um of Picture Book Art and the National Yiddish Book Center.

“We expect the resources of these two campuses to help tremendously in our efforts to expand the circle of committed readers in the commonwealth and to foster an appreciation for the past, present, and future of the book and book arts in Massachusetts,” said Sharon Shallo, the state center’s executive director. “I can’t think of two better institutions to help us in our next stage of development.”

The Center for the Book is a program begun by the Li- brary of Congress in 1977 to promote books, reading, li- braries, and literacy. The cen- ter has fifty-one state-affiliated centers around the country, which use themes established by the Library of Congress to develop programs and activi- ties celebrating their states’ own book cultures and literary heritage. For further information, go to www.massbook.org or call the center at (617) 521-2719 in Boston or (413) 559-5482 in Amherst.

Teens Look to the Library for Journaling Inspiration

The Teton County (Wyo.) Li- brary empowered teens to begin their own exploration of the illustrated journal with the “Young Adult Journaling Workshop.” Local journaling and art enthusiast Melissa Malm conducted the work- shop. Malm says the benefits of journaling, especially for teens, are many. “I think it’s a good way for teens to work out who they are and what they want to do. Journals truly do tell a story about each person, and to go back and read your journals years later is a real gift,” said Malm.

Much of this insight comes from Malm’s own experience. She began keeping an illustrated journal when she was just twelve years old. Several members of her own family handed down sketch- books through the genera- tions, but she always wished there were words to complete the stories told by illustrations. “Over the last few years, journals have become a vehicle for my art,” Malm says.

The workshop began with writing and drawing exercises and various examples of cre- ative journaling. To inspire the group to think outside of typi- cal standards for diary keep- ing, Malm drew on the work of notable community jour- nalers, as well as her own work. After the initial writing and drawing exercises, partici- pants were free to wander in the library to observe happen- ings in their journals. The re- sulting documentation of “a day in the life of the library” will be compiled into a display of art and language for the young adult area.

“The biggest benefit I’d say journaling provides is the possibility of getting to know yourself,” says Malm. “Journals tell a story you might forget and are also a legacy you can leave for other people.” For more information, call youth services at (307) 733-2164, ext. 103.

Celebrate RCPL and Maurice Sendak

“Where the Wild Things Are: Maurice Sendak in His Own Words and Pictures,” an inter- active exhibit for children of all ages, was displayed as a part of the celebration honoring the tenth anniversary of the Richland County (S.C.) Public Library.

Maurice Sendak, often called the Picasso of children’s
books, has written and illustrated more than one hundred books. The exhibit explored his past and the reasons it remains an inspiration to him and included colorful, interactive pieces that allowed children and adults to recreate their favorite Sendak stories. Children slid into a giant bowl of chicken soup from *Chicken Soup with Rice*, became Max and steered the boat that led him to *Where the Wild Things Are*, and even tried on a wild thing costume.

*Where the Wild Things Are* marked a turning point in Maurice Sendak’s career, representing, in his words, “the end of a long apprenticeship.” He felt that all the work he had done to that point was merely preparation for creating this work. Its publication, for which he received the coveted Caldecott Medal in 1964, confirmed his place as an internationally famous children’s book author-illustrator.

For more information, visit www.richland.lib.sc.us.

**World’s Largest Ceiling Clock Gives Library a Face Lift**

A forty-foot clock looking down from the rotunda of the Central Library in Lexington, Kentucky, is one piece of a community art project that combined science, art, and history, transforming the five-story rotunda into a Lexington landmark.

The project includes three components: the world’s largest ceiling clock; a seventy-four-foot Foucault pendulum; and a frieze depicting the history of the horse in the Bluegrass. The clock features a traditional clock face and up-to-date technology controlling its timekeeping, lights, and chimes. It is mounted on the library’s fourth floor ceiling, overlooking the rotunda. Galloping around the clock face is a series of horses inspired by the nineteenth-century photographs of Eadweard Muybridge, which are considered to be the origin of motion pictures. The pendulum swings over a terrazzo-mosaic floor depicting North America. It is intended to draw the eye upward to the clock. The pendulum is named for nineteenth-century French physicist Jean Bernard Léon Foucault, who used a free-swinging pendulum to perform the first demonstration of the Earth’s rotation. The frieze surrounds the pendulum above the rotunda’s first floor and plays off the themes suggested by the clock. The frieze depicts horse breeds important to the region, as well as Lexington-area jockeys who won the Kentucky Derby around the turn of the twentieth-century.

The three-part project took about two months to install. Library officials expect the clock to help increase library visits and to provide a boost to downtown and Lexington tourism in general. Because the project fuses lessons in art, history, and science, library officials are also collaborating with local schools on ways to use the clock as a teaching tool.

For more information, contact Doug Tattershall, Media Relations Coordinator, at (859) 231-5515 or write dtattershall@lexpublib.org.

**CYC Programs Benefit from Foundation’s Generosity**

Thanks in large part to a generous grant from the Helena Foundation, the Community Youth Corps (CYC) program of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, Maryland, will continue its service to city teens this year. CYC is Pratt’s youth outreach program that helps teens earn the service learning hours required for high school graduation in Maryland, teaches them a variety of technological skills, and gives them important work experience as they enter the adult world.

CYC participants are a valued resource at the Pratt Library. Last year some CYC teens spent four months working with an outside consultant to learn about effective public presentations. They gained knowledge of community organizing, agenda setting, and media presentation designed to highlight a specific message. Their final project was to write a grant request to the Youth as Resources initiative asking for project funding.

Other CYC participants worked closely with staff from Pratt’s branch libraries. The teens led story hours, helped younger children use Kids’...
Our Trusty Trustees

Nann Blaine Hilyard

In a recent exchange on the PubLib electronic discussion list some librarians were surprised to learn that not all libraries and library boards are established the same way.

Most public libraries operate because of statutes that authorize a tax levy to support them. Sometimes that authorization is granted to counties or cities, which are allowed to establish a library department. Other libraries are separate taxing districts, analogous to school districts. The state permits the voters to authorize such a district, and once established, the district can ask the voters to levy taxes to operate the library.

Other public libraries are chartered as private corporations. These “association” libraries are prevalent in the northeastern states. The New York and Boston Public Libraries are very large examples. Association libraries vary: for some, the municipality owns the building and the association operates the library; in others, it's the other way around. Tax revenue is augmented by endowment income. In many of these libraries that nontax revenue is significant.

Whether a government entity or an association, nearly all public libraries have boards of trustees or directors. Advisory board members may be elected or appointed. Their advice goes in two directions: to the library director and to the larger unit of government (municipality or county). Such boards generally do not have taxing authority. They may create policy, or they may recommend it. They may hire and fire the director, or they may recommend it.

Governing board members may also be elected or appointed. These board members are responsible to the people who elected them, either the association members or the voters. They employ the director, decide policy, and approve the budget.

The essays in this column share the thoughts of trustees who have served in three different types of public libraries—a district, an association, and a county department.

The Responsibility of Library Trustees

Donald W. Green
President, Board of Trustees, Clinton-Macomb Public Library, Michigan; dwgreen@ameritech.net

Over the years that I've been a library trustee it has been my pleasure to meet and share experiences with many library trustees from other communities. I felt the need to get information from other communities that I might apply to my library. Experience is so important for success.

First, let me say that I found that there are a good many library trustees who are well informed and dedicated and doing a great job for their library. They are generally the inspired people I meet while attending library conventions and seminars. This is where they learn. There should be more of these good trustees.

Far too often, however, I have heard (discomforting) remarks from other library trustees—comments that I really don’t like to hear. I discovered that many library trustees don’t seem to take the responsibility of their trusteeship very seriously. It’s unfortunate to hear that some who sit on the library board have a feeling of “What am I doing here?” In these people, there is an absence of any sense of responsibility or dedication. There is more at work here than the usual 80/20 rule.

I am well aware of the different types of library governance structures. Some libraries are creations of counties, cities, or townships and become a line item in the budgets of larger entities. Other libraries are created by statute and are independent agencies. At some libraries, the trustees are appointed and have only advisory responsibilities, while at others, library boards do indeed hire directors, approve budgets, and set policies of the library. There is a wide range of governance.

Why are these irresponsible volunteer citizens library trustees? Some were appointed as a political favor. Others thought of it as strictly an honorary appointment that had no responsibility. Many ran and were elected because political friends said it would be good for them to get “started” in local politics. Some didn’t know why they were appointed to the library board, but they didn’t want to say no to the appointment.

I am absolutely amazed by the number of trustees who say they consider their only duty to be attending the meetings and listening to the director’s monthly report. That’s about the extent of their participation. Some even say they think it improper to speak up at the board meetings. As for being an active advocate for the library, I was flabbergasted to learn that many don’t consider this as anything they were “supposed” to do.

Awful stuff? You bet. I think that these library trustees are reluctant to be advocates and visionaries because they don’t really understand their roles. Some of them don’t even attend the board meetings regularly.

Can this be one of the reasons why there is a crisis for many libraries around the country? I think so. Without a strong base of community advocates for the library, who will do the heavy work of promoting the library? The director? Do we hire the director to become the cheerleader for the library? Doesn’t the director have enough responsibility managing the library?

The library director should not be made to appear self-serving by promoting larger budgets and increased programming. The director relies on board members to convey the needs and vision of the library to the elected officials and to the public. The board members represent the community.

One library trustee told me recently that her library was having a severe fiscal crisis and they might have to close one more day a week. She was worried because the library was always so busy and shouldn’t lose any open hours. She said the city council slashed the library budget in favor of the other community services because they didn’t think the library was “that important.” I asked her how many of the library trustees attended the city budget review meeting to present a case for the library budget. She said that none attended because they didn’t think it was their responsibility. How sad!
There are a number of things that need to be done, including addressing the way libraries are organized or chartered under state laws. However, short of this major change, I offer these suggestions:

1. Better screening of candidates for appointment to library boards. Do the candidates truly have a love for libraries and their place in the community? Will they speak out for the library?
2. A thorough orientation for newly elected or appointed board members. It should be more than a one-hour luncheon meeting. The new members should meet with the rest of the board and have a separate meeting with the director. Be sure each board member receives a good basic manual for trusteeship.
3. The library director should keep the board members constantly supplied with worthwhile information relating to current library problems and issues.
4. The library board should take time at the monthly meeting to discuss local, state, and national library issues and determine a position on these issues.
5. The director should fully engage the board, whether it is governing or advisory.
6. The library must invest in its board members by providing opportunities for continuing education. Can the library pay the dues for members to belong to state and national library associations?

There is no excuse, aside from health problems, for a board member not to take an active role on the board. Board members must be informed and willing to participate, not only at board meetings, but in their communities and at the state and national levels.

Finally, smart library directors make an informed and engaged library board a priority. They know that the growth and survival of their library is in direct proportion to the advocacy of their board members and friends.

**A Trustee’s Perspective**

Ralph Proehlman with Barbara Proehlman
Nevins Memorial Library, Methuen, Massachusetts; bprolman@yahoo.com

My wife and I have served on the library board at the Nevins Memorial Library for more than twenty-three years. We have seen five directors come and four of them go. Each one enriched and enhanced the library, adding their individual style to create the library as it exists today.

Recently, we completed a massive remodeling and expansion project. When asked what I would want from a director or staff member, I am informed by the tale of what we have lived through in Methuen during the first 115 years of our library building.

What would you reasonably expect in a library building? Heat, air conditioning, restrooms on each floor, running water, and a staff lounge? Comfortable seating areas? Elevator and ramp access for people with disabilities? We have all that in our renovated library that opened in June 2002. Yet until our renovation we could not provide all these amenities for our patrons or for our staff.

The original library was built between 1881 and 1882. A hundred years later its liabilities were evident: it was cold in the winter and very, very warm in the summer. Getting a drink of water often meant walking downstairs. Space was at a premium. Offices that had never been thought of in the original design of the building were added wherever they would fit.

The staff put up with it because working at the Nevins Memorial Library is not just going to a job but going to a place one comes to love. It is a friendly place, a community of people who care for one another in their service to the public. One of the Nevins staff members has been with us for fifty-six years. When one of the staff members becomes ill or faces a time of crisis, many pitch in to help, going well beyond even the phrase “exceeding expectation.” Such is the dedication and caring of the staff at the Nevins Memorial Library.

We trustees have limited resources. When we were finally able to modernize, we went to the staff. What did they need, in addition to modern amenities, to keep the library a place where they could continue to enjoy working? We listened to their suggestions, which proved to be invaluable. Those who work at a specific job are usually the best authorities on what improvements are needed. One such suggestion came from a part-time custodian. When he met with the architect, he pointed out the need for a janitor’s closet on every floor. That convenience had been overlooked. That suggestion, among other ideas, was incorporated into the plan because the staff truly wants to do their best. The resulting building is a wonderful library that is both aesthetically pleasing and efficient. The project demonstrated a team approach with the staff and trustees working in concert.

What do I as a trustee want from the director and staff? Simply to be who they are—a knowledgeable, caring, and gifted group of people who genuinely enjoy working together to meet the needs of the public. In so doing they exemplify what can only be termed a truly caring community. They should be secure in the knowledge that the trustees appreciate what they do. As for future additions to the staff—whomever joins us should value a working environment that is truly a community, one that understands that service to the public goes beyond sharing knowledge. Our patrons find the library a welcoming, comfortable space filled with people dedicated to helping them utilize the library’s resources. We hope we can continue to provide library services in these comfortable surroundings for the next 120 years.

**Low-Cost Training Program for Trustees**

Karen Dyer
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Once upon a time (actually 1999), in a land the residents viewed as the State of Paradise, known to the rest of us as Hawaii, lived a consultant who was an expert on board effectiveness and volunteer training. This expert, Carla Lehn, was invited to present a three-hour session on that topic at the California Association of Library Trustees and Commissioners (CALTAC) Library Leadership workshops. The presentation was very well received.
Too good to end at this point, the workshop chair, Jackie Harrison, asked Carla if she could videotape the presentation so that more trustees and commissioners could learn from it. After all, many library boards in California are so remote and so small that it is not feasible for a board member to travel to a CALTAC workshop. Carla went home and thought about it. She wanted to provide something more than a videotape because she knew that a videotape would not provide the group interaction that was a central part of the training. Soon, Carla was talking with Al Bennett, library programs consultant at the California State Library, about training volunteer trustees to go to California library boards and be, in effect, Carla- clones. They would give the same presentation Carla had done at the CALTAC workshops.

Funding for this program would be provided as part of the California State Library’s Rural Initiative, paid for by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the California State Library. With this funding, the program could be provided free of charge to all California library boards requesting it.

The board members wrote up job descriptions for the committee chair, the committee members, and the trustees and commissioners who would be presenting the training. They drew up policies and procedures and, most importantly, they began to seek volunteer trustee trainer recruits.

Requirements to become a potential trainer include:

- Two to three years’ experience as a local California Library Board member, trustee, or commissioner
- Being a member of CALTAC, or willing to become one
- Commitment to the mission of CALTAC and the goals of the project
- Demonstrated success in training adults
- Successful completion of CALTAC training of trainers
- Certification as a CALTAC Board Development Project volunteer trainer
- Current California driver’s license and car insurance

In April 2000 eleven volunteer trustees were trained by Carla Lehn to present the three-hour Board Effectiveness Training. Carla had developed a curriculum from her earlier presentation, the CALTAC Trustee Tool Kit, and her knowledge as a speaker and trainer. The newly formed CALTAC Board Development Committee accepted applications from interested trustees and held telephone interviews with each candidate. Those who were still interested and qualified attended the weekend training. The candidates were reimbursed their travel and motel expenses. Meals were included.

The project was then advertised via a letter under the signature of the California State Librarian, Kevin Starr, through postings to electronic discussion lists, placement of an article in the California Library Association’s newsletter, the State Library’s Connections newsletter, and in CALTAC’s newsletter, CALTACtics.

The response showed that the need was there! From the first training presented in June to the end of the federal fiscal year four months later, more than thirty library boards had contacted then-chair Alan Smith and seventeen library boards received the Board Effectiveness Training, with the balance of the boards scheduled for the second fiscal year.

In October 2000 a second training of trainers was held. At the end of the second fiscal year, forty library boards had received training! In September 2002 a third training was held. At the end of the third fiscal year (September 30, 2002), sixty library boards had been trained!

As Smith pointed out, trainings have been given from border to border (Alturas to Calexico) and from the mountains to the ocean (Lincoln to Redondo Beach).

For each request, the trainer closest to the library is contacted by the chair and asked to give the training. In this way, reimbursed travel expenses are kept to a minimum. The project’s budget for the current federal fiscal year is $3,500, based on thirty-five trainings averaging $100 in travel expenses. Training costs have ranged from $10 to $400. A $400 training would be for a rural library board, for example, where the trainer needed to fly, rent a car, stay overnight, and have several meals.

A general summary of topics covered in the Board Effectiveness Training is as follows:

- Why we have library boards
- Types of library boards in California
- What library boards do
- Legal duties and liabilities of library board members
- Success strategies for boards
- Working toward good board–library director relations
- What we can do to help our board be effective and what are our goals
- Additional resources available to help

Each workshop is tailored to the specific needs and issues of the board or commission being trained.

One additional feature of the training is that the library director or manager must participate in the training to learn what the board has been taught and to contribute to the workshop.

The training does not end when the three hours are over. The trainer contacts the library board six months later to see how that board’s goals are coming along and if, and how, the board training has helped it. Also, for education and funding value, each trainer provides an anecdotal report of that particular training experience.

The trainers have an opportunity to participate in this program on an annual basis by answering questions on an annual self-assessment form.

Sandi Genser-Maack (trustee, Richmond) answered the question “How did you enjoy the training work that you did on behalf of the project?” by stating that she loved it and found it valuable and worthwhile, and that her time was well spent. “I always learn something from the trainings I do,” she wrote.

Jane Jones (trustee, Palos Verdes) answered the same question as follows: “Very satisfying. Very appreciative board members and directors. I especially feel it is a very worthwhile and effective program for trustees and a very important function of CALTAC.”
One library board chair stated: “I appreciate that you provided handy written information. . . . [The outcome of the workplace] was a structured discussion that specifically addressed issues in our community. Thank you and thank CALTAC for providing a valuable service.”

Thomas Barrington (trustee, El Centro), now a trainee, was a member of the first library board trained. He reported that the board found the training “very helpful.”

A terrific side effect of the program is that CALTAC membership has risen dramatically. Each library board receives membership brochures, a copy of CALTAC’s Trustee Tool Kit, and information on what CALTAC can provide trustees, commissioners, and system advisory board members. By increasing membership, CALTAC becomes bigger and more influential in statewide advocacy.

Now that training has been running for three years, we are starting to get requests from formerly trained boards that have had enough turnover to warrant a second training. This is wonderful, and a measure of the program’s success!

Travel expenses (such as mileage, airfare, lodging, and meals) for all involved in this program are paid out of the grant. Allowable expenses (and the standards by which they are calculated) are set by the California State Library.

The time, commitment, and talent of the people involved in the board effectiveness training has been given freely. It is due to their dedication that the program has met with such success.

Conclusion

I have directed six public libraries during my twenty-eight-year career. Two of the libraries are city departments. During my tenure, neither city government was quite sure where the library fit into its organization and allowed the library board to make most of the operating decisions. Two of the libraries are private. The one operated by a women’s club meant it was an outlet for most of the operating decisions. Two of the libraries are private. The one operated by a women’s club meant it was an outlet for most of the operating decisions.

I estimate I have worked with, and for, seventy-five trustees in these six libraries. We’ve had 330 regular board meetings and a third again as many committee and special meetings. I remember nearly all of these trustees, some better than others.

What qualities have I come to appreciate in trustees?

- Familiarity with the library. They and their families used the library years before they became trustees, and they still do.
- Support for the library. Trustees are members of the Friends, help out at fund-raising events, attend library programs, and name the library in their wills. Trustees lobby for the library to local, state, and national legislators. Trustees encourage their business associates and neighbors to do the same.
- Informed presence. Trustees come to meetings having read the board packet. They know the general library policies and basic budget.
- Respect for the library staff. Trustees do not demand special treatment. They regard staff areas as private. They seek fair pay and benefits for all library staff.
- Respect for the library director. Trustees acknowledge the director’s expertise and the challenges of the position. The director works with the board, not for it.
- Sense of the trustee’s responsibility. Their role is not self-aggrandizement. It is to seek, collaboratively, the best for the library so that the library’s mission can be fulfilled.

Having vision for the library, being committed to it, and being informed—I hope that can be said of each of the more than 70,000 trustees who currently serve on library boards across the country! Go, and do good work.

Conclusion

Being a library director is the greatest job you may ever have! And your first “directorship” can be the most educational, the most interesting, and the most fun. It will likely also be the most frightening job you ever have (assuming your previous job did not involve being shot at). It is almost certainly the one that gives you the most opportunity to innovate and to create. You may never again have this kind of an opportunity to leave your mark on a library and a community. This is not to say there are not going to be problems.

Particularly if you are making a lot of changes, even if they are good changes, some people will be threatened by what you are doing. Do not panic. Keep building your network of friends and supporters in your community, your board, and your staff. They will help keep you going while you and your library achieve new heights of greatness!

Mary Wilkins Jordan is Head of Administrative Services at the Kenosha (Wisc.) Public Library; mjordan@kenosha.lib.wi.us.
Neat As a New Pin
An Interview with Mem Fox

Natalie Ziarnik

Mem Fox is widely considered to be today’s most popular Australian author for children. Her first picture book, Possum Magic, is a quest story that gives a tour of Australian state capitals and celebrates Australian food and animals. Her other picture books—such as Koala Lou, Time for Bed, and Hattie and the Fox—are well-loved by children everywhere for their reassuring, hopeful messages and delightful rhythms and rhymes. Fox’s deep understanding of children’s emotions comes through in all her work. In addition to writing, Fox speaks on early literacy around the world and promotes introducing very young children to reading in a fun and lively way.

Natalie Ziarnik interviewed Fox at the Public Library Association’s Spring Symposium in Chicago on March 6, 2003. Fox showed up at the interview looking like springtime in her pink suit and ever-present smile.

PL: How did you first start writing children’s books?

MF: I was studying children’s literature as a mature-age student at the university. One of the assignments for the course was to write a children’s book. All of us students thought it would be so easy, but, of course, it wasn’t. Our instructor wanted us to respect children’s book authors, so she had us each write a book ourselves to see that the process was far from easy. My story, Hush the Invisible Mouse, later turned into Possum Magic. This story did not start out as a good one, but I developed the threads of a story that eventually became one of the best-known books in Australia.

PL: Could you talk a little about your writing process?

MF: First, before I begin any writing, my house needs to be “neat as a new pin”—everything must be done—which means I only write about ten days each year!

Writing is the hardest work; I detest every minute of it. I only do it because I want kids to love reading, and it is so important that they have really good books. The writing process—figuring out rhythms in lines and counting syllables—is something I really dread. The language in my books must be divine; everything must be in the right place.

Whenever I get an idea, I throw it into a file and wait until I feel the right emotions to write a story.

PL: I’ve read that one of your hobbies is spring cleaning. How did you come to enjoy cleaning?

MF: I have a fantastic life that looks glamorous: I travel in planes, get to stay in posh hotels, have a nice husband, and live in a house by the sea. Sometimes life is too good to be true. Taking some cleaning fluid and scrubbing the stove helps me feel grounded. I don’t want to escape things that matter.

I like to keep my house tidy. Whenever the doorbell rings, I rush around and adjust cushions in the house.

During my time off between high school and drama school, I worked as a maid in a hotel in Switzerland. The woman who trained me in Switzerland was fanatically tidy, insisting that we fold and stack tea towels so that all the stripes were lined up just so. As I was already going this way (in terms of being an overly eager housecleaner) anyway, I was happy to learn about these household cleaning and organizing procedures.

PL: I’ve noticed that your stories often feature the elderly, like the book Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge in which a young boy’s “house was next door to an old people’s home and he [the boy] knew all the people who lived there.” Did you have any special grandparents or know any other older people?

Favorite Books Written by Mem Fox


MF: I love old people. My grandfather Wilfrid Partridge lived in an old people’s home until he died suddenly of pneumonia at the age of 96. He was sparky and wonderful to talk to up until the time he died. I have much respect for older people and spent many days in old people’s homes visiting my granddad, darling dad, and mum before they died. I once heard a nurse speaking to my grandfather in a condescending voice and I was outraged. The elderly may seem to be wrecks of their former selves, but they deserve our respect.

The characters in Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge have the same dignity and characteristics of the people who lived in the home with my grandfather. I hope this book will encourage children and the elderly to meet each other. Children and the elderly get along brilliantly.

PL: You attended the Rose Bruford Drama School in London and then taught drama at Cabra Dominican College in Adelaide, South Australia. How has your drama background influenced your writing?

MF: This background has been of critical importance. In drama school, I learned beautiful language—both ancient and modern—by heart. The sound of language and its phrasing had more influence on me than any instruction in grammatical correctness. For many years, the language of Shakespeare and other poets was in my head.

Living with missionary parents, I grew up listening to the cadences of the St. James Bible, where no syllable is out of place. When I work, I feel that I am writing orderly music with a beat. I can hear the music if the phrasing is perfect.

In her talk following this interview, Mem Fox’s theatrical background was fully evident in her lively telling of The Magic Hat, her latest book. After sharing the story’s rousing rhythms and repetitions, Fox noted that she couldn’t possibly be “mean” to a child while reading such a joyful book. In fact, reading aloud, according to Fox, should be about being kind and loving and wanting to be with the child. This special time together needs to be happy or, in Fox’s words, “comforting, noisy, precious, perfect, and then peaceful.”

To find out more about Mem Fox’s views on reading aloud and to view her “Ten Read Aloud Commandments,” visit www.memfox.net.

Natalie Ziarnik is Head of Children’s Services at the Ela Area Public Library in Lake Zurich, Illinois; nziarnik@eapl.org.

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Librarian Chic

(ˈlibrəriˈchik) n. A fashion style that uses elements of, or is inspired by, the styles stereotypically attributed to librarians.

Example Citation #1
When Natalie Merchant was a twenty-something chanteuse fronting 10,000 Maniacs, she was every nerdish schoolboy’s crush. With her unadorned voice, intelligent lyrics and librarian chic, Merchant broke a few million hearts and spawned the Lilith Fair generation in the process.


Example Citation #2
At Luella Bartley they came in fifties-inspired black and white, reminiscent of gym sneakers, and at Miu Miu, the look was sexy librarian.

The trend got a boost from Nicole Kidman, who made anti-fashion de rigueur in her Oscar-winning performance of The Hours. It’s also linked to the changing tastes of an aging demographic, and a collective longing for the honest and down-to-earth.


Earliest Citation
It is time for afternoon tea. He settles down and pours; she brings the biscuits. Domestic bliss in the housing estate outback of south London? Not quite.

There is something surreal about the very normality. East End born-and-bred Tim Gane, 31, and his Parisian girlfriend, Laetitia Sadier, 27, look like right-on Londoners in their librarian chic needlepin cords and Marks and Spencer cardies. You wouldn’t guess that they are, respectively, the multi-instrumentalist and the cryptic Marxist wordsmith of an experimental lo-fi pop outfit called Stereolab.


From www.wordspy.com, posted April 14, 2003, reprinted with permission.
Alternative Online Book Review Resources

Steven M. Cohen

Like many library professionals, I am a strong proponent of reading. I understand that writing about reading in a magazine for public librarians is, in essence, preaching to the choir. We all understand why reading is so important, both for educational improvement as well as relaxation. That said, how many books do you read on a monthly basis? I must admit that the number of books that I read throughout the years has diminished due to more responsibilities at work and at home.

Reading, however, is important, and I have made it a personal goal to become better acquainted with the written word in the future. Being a techie librarian, I decided that I needed to find books that would be able to keep my attention, and perusing the popular review sources that I’ve used in the past for book selection (e.g., the New York Times “Sunday Book Review”) wouldn’t work. So, I took a few hours out of my busy day and located seven book-related Web sites that provide information on reading material that would fit my needs. These sites do not review the books found at the front of Borders or Barnes and Noble (in fact, many don’t even provide book reviews), but the commentary and links to books that are not covered in the popular press make these useful sites for librarians.

Don’t be fooled by the name of this first resource. Bookslut (www.bookslut.com) is a Web magazine dedicated to reading. Every month, this site releases a free online issue of its magazine filled with interesting articles about books and reading. As of April 2003, there were twelve issues available. Each issue includes feature articles (which sometimes spotlight interviews with authors), book reviews for fiction and nonfiction, and monthly columns by the Bookslut staff, featuring titles such as “Comicbookslut,” “Library Rakehell,” and “Magazine Whore.” Each aspect of this publication is archived by these subjects.

Booksut also features a weblog (www.bookslut.com/blog.html), maintained by the editor-in-chief of the magazine, Jessa Crispin. Every day, Crispin discusses book-related stories that appear in the popular and alternative press. She also talks about books that have been made into movies, offers her picks for various book awards, and usually throws in a library-related link or two during the week. Crispin’s viewpoints are sharp-witted and always good for a jab or two against her least favorite writers. Keeping with the theme of the naked posterior that makes up the logo for Bookslut, this site is fresh, opinionated, and un Concerned about how readers will react. We need more Booksluts in this world.

Moby Lives (www.mobylives.com), like Bookslut, is a multipurpose site, whose first aspect is a weekly column dedicated to books and writing whose second part is a daily weblog of the same type of material, albeit a shorter version. The third section includes letters written by readers of the site. Even though Moby Lives does not include book reviews, the author, Dennis Loy Johnson, provides insightful commentary on the book establishment and points to many books that are not reviewed in the popular press.

Moby’s weekly column is posted one day after appearing in a few major newspapers throughout the country. The column appears on the left side of the site and previous columns from January 2001 on are available via the archives. The daily news log consists of links to the literary news of the day as well as commentary on those links, with each entry running about 200 words. The news log is not archived. Also featured on Moby Lives are links to poetry sites and a few book reviews. Moby Lives is a useful site for those looking to read about aspects of books and reading that do not appear in the major newspapers across the country.

Arts and Letters Daily (www.aldaily.com), run by the Chronicle of Higher Education, features a newspaper-type interface and links to other sites that publish material on current events, books, and essays. The first section, “Articles of Note,” links to current-event stories that appear in various international publications. The next section is a listing of new books that have appeared on the literary scene. The third section includes essays and opinions that have been printed elsewhere. Thus, the editors of Arts and Letters Daily gather material from other literary sources and bring it together in one place.

One of the strengths of Arts and Letters Daily is the extensive categorized links collected over the years that provide the material for the site. The categories include newspapers, magazines, columnists, book reviews, favorites, weblogs, and diversions. If readers do not find that Arts and Letters Daily provides interesting reading, these links provide plenty of alternatives.

Blogcritics (www.atlastest.hmdns.net/~eolsen) is an interesting site that compiles reviews of books, movies, music, and other media that have been written by “bloggers,” people who publish to a weblog. Thus, these reviews do not stem from magazines or newspapers, but from amateur writers, who happen to read, listen to music, and watch movies. Blogcritics can be compared to asking a friend for an honest answer about a certain book rather than reading a review in a printed publication. The Blogcritics site is searchable for those who are looking for a specific review. In addition, the site provides a lengthy list of the bloggers who participate in Blogcritics, and the site owners invite submissions from anyone who runs a weblog.

The Complete Review (www.complete-review.com/main/main.html) touts itself as “A selectively comprehensive, objectively opinionated survey of books old and new, trying to meet...
all your book review, preview, and information needs.” The site has many sections worth visiting.

The “What’s New” page provides new reviews recently added to the site. After a complete perusal of the other sections, the reader should bookmark this page to read the newest reviews. “The Best” section provides a listing of (as the name implies) the best and most underrated books that have been reviewed. “The Best” provides the rest of the book reviews that are incorporated in the site as well as books that were denied a place.” The “Review Index” provides numerous indexes that have been created around the 1,000 book reviews found on the site. These indexes include listings by author, title, nationality, and genre. The links page provides an extensive listing of book review sources. The Literary Saloon (www.complete-review.com/saloon) is a weblog, updated regularly with links and commentary on the literary world. Last, the Complete Review Quarterly (www.complete-review.com/quarterly) is an online journal dedicated to literary analysis and other detailed information that is beyond the scope of the main complete review site. Those who like an alternative book review experience will enjoy browsing through the Complete Review.

January Magazine (www.janmag.com) is another book and literature site with multiple features and categories. This site is essentially made up of two sections: book reviews and interviews with authors. The book reviews section is broken down into many categories including fiction, nonfiction, crime fiction, art and culture, cookbooks, biographies, and many more. The interview section is not that extensive, but worth a look if a favorite author is profiled. January Magazine is a useful tool because it discusses books that, like all of the sites mentioned here, are not international bestsellers but are well worth a read.

January Magazine also includes two mailing lists (one for the content in the magazine itself and the other for their crime list (www.janmag.com/crfiction/rapsheet.html), which profiles new books in the crime fiction genre. January Magazine also includes a search engine.

BookFilter (www.bookfilter.com) is a collaborative weblog that points to stories, Web sites, and news about books, authors, and other related literature. Similar to Blogcritics in that the posts stem from many sources, BookFilter is manned by several authors who post to the weblog on a daily basis. Readers who want to post commentary can either use the comments feature or create a username and post a full entry to the site.

Collaborative weblogs are helpful within the framework of book reviews in that the readers can get opinions from multiple sources rather than just one reviewer of the book. Amazon.com (www.amazon.com) also allows readers to post their opinions about the books that are featured. While BookFilter doesn’t necessarily discuss book reviews in every post, there are numerous comments on every post.

Relying on the more popular book review sources may be fine for the patrons in your library as well as your own personal reading, but for those who like to read books with a different feel that do not appear in these popular sources, the sites mentioned in this article may be of use. These resources also may be useful for those librarians who work with patrons with eclectic tastes.

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Resources

Arts and Letters Daily
www.aldaily.com

Blogcritics
www.atlastest.hmdns.net/~eolsen

BookFilter
www.bookfilter.com

Booksut
www.booksut.com

Weblog
www.booksut.com/blog.html

The Complete Review
www.complete-review.com/main/main.html
“What’s New”
www.complete-review.com/new/new.html
“The Best”
www.complete-review.com/best/best.html
“The Rest”
www.complete-review.com/rest/rest.html

“Review Index”
www.complete-review.com/maindex/maindex.html

“Links”
www.complete-review.com/links/links.html

The Complete Review Quarterly
www.complete-review.com/quarterly

The Literary Saloon
www.complete-review.com/saloon

January Magazine
www.janmag.com

Author interviews
www.janmag.com/profiles/alphaprofiles.html

“Rap Sheet” (crime fiction report and mailing list)
www.janmag.com/crfiction/rapsheet.html

Moby Lives
www.mobylives.com
Managing Full-Text Electronic Serials

Paula Wilson

Information-seeking behaviors of patrons normally fall into one of the following categories: (1) they are searching for information on a topic; (2) they want to browse the table of contents of a specific magazine; or (3) they want a copy of a specific article. Many inquiries, however, from both patrons and staff, resemble the third request. Searchers simply want to know how to locate a specific magazine article appearing in a known journal title. When did such a simple question become so difficult to answer? During the last several years libraries who have purchased online databases were also recipients of state-purchased databases. Access to full-text periodicals has grown exponentially. At the same time, aggregators have dropped, lost, or added rights to publications.

Although library staff can verify their access to certain periodicals by checking local holdings and visiting vendor Web sites, many patrons may be fumbling on the library Web site without direction, searching for a list of magazines to which the library subscribes. They encounter terms such as research databases, online databases, electronic resources, premium databases, and e-resources. Once they have determined the correct choice, they will find that magazines and newspapers are sometimes categorized within a topical list of electronic resources. Is it fair to expect users to make the connection between those labels and a search for a magazine article? Many of the databases that traditionally held periodicals have morphed into all-inclusive databases housing formats such as pamphlets, parts of reference books, government documents, Web sites, transcripts, and images. Links from a library Web page to “magazines and newspapers” seemed to be very myopic, so libraries broadened the term. If patrons can get through the first hurdle, the second one is even more of a stretch. Library subscriptions to databases can run anywhere from five to fifty-five. Do we really expect users to search through each database to locate the full-text version of Modern Plastics or Scientific American?

This anomaly is not apparent until you place yourself in the shoes of the user. If it is cumbersome for staff to find out what resources are available to patrons, then we can assume it is very difficult for our patrons to find out. Some libraries include direct links right on their home page, such as the Chicago Public Library’s “magazines, newspapers, and databases” link (www.chipublib.org). How can libraries connect patrons with the vast amount of information located in aggregated databases? Fortunately there are several companies that offer services that can help.

These services offer a consolidated list of all online full-text magazine and newspaper holdings to which libraries subscribe. In many cases, print and microfiche holdings can be included if the library provides the information to the vendor. Due to the ever-changing nature of these holdings, frequent updating is necessary, making the task of keeping up with changes nearly impossible for a library to manage on its own. Frequency of updates ranges from weekly to bimonthly to quarterly. In addition, libraries should keep in mind that most, but not all, databases will be tracked by the selected vendor. Libraries should provide a link to the content lists of databases not included in the tracking service.

In some cases, links take visitors directly to a journal title; other times they point to the database search page. User authentication must also be in place for remote access. Proxy server prefixes and customized URLs can be incorporated into the list so that users are prompted for the appropriate access information. Lists come in a variety of formats such as Microsoft Excel, HTML, XML, MARC, comma delimited, or PDF. Libraries can present them in HTML so that visitors may browse by titles (e.g., the Cuyahoga County [Ohio] Public Tech Talk explores issues that public librarians face when they offer electronic services and network content.

It aims to create a bridge between the practical and theoretical issues related to technology.

Listings of full-text journals include holdings and a link to the database for retrieval.
Library site; from www.cuyahogalibrary.org, select Research, Databases. The site of Queens Borough Public Library allows users to search by title and ISSN (from www.queenslibrary.org, select Research).

The amount of staff time needed to implement this service includes time spent preparing lists of print and microfiche for inclusion into the list. Also, libraries who want to offer their visitors the ability to search journal titles may need staff to program a front end to the database.

Pricing structures are connected to the number of full-text journal holdings. Many of the vendors offer discounts for multiyear contracts and to library consortia. Prices are, for the most part, surprisingly affordable. For example, a library whose full-text journal holdings are between 7,001 and 10,000 will pay $1,690 annually for A-to-Z List with Journal Linker, according to the Serials Solution Web site (www.serialssolutions.com/join.asp).

In addition to organizing full-text serial collections, related services exist that can boost use of your online journal collection. Libraries can purchase batch MARC records of online journals for inclusion into the catalog. With OPENUrl enabled, linking from abstracts and indexes to the full-text of the article elsewhere in the collection is a click away. Users will be linked to the full text of an article from a citation or abstract if it exists anywhere within the library database collection. No longer will they have to jump from database to database in search of an article's full text. If the full text of that article exists, they will be presented with a link to it in their initial search.

The basic premise behind these services is to increase awareness, accessibility, and use of the library's electronic databases. There are other services that libraries can deploy that may complement a library's electronic and print journal lists. Many libraries are now using the services of companies such as WebFeat (www.webfeat.org) that wrap all of a library's electronic databases, including the ILS, into one search. ILS vendors are beginning to offer similar features as well. Through Voyager, LinkFinderPlus, and Citation Server, Endeavor Information Systems (www.endinfosys.com) claims to "deliver all access to databases held within the library and physically held outside the library walls. . . ." Perhaps ILS companies will continue to enhance their products so that the OPAC provides one-stop access to a library's entire collection.

It is clear, however, that if libraries intend to continue purchasing online databases, especially if they are replacing print and microfilm formats with electronic access, they need an efficient way to keep up with the changes inherent in an electronic environment.
Opportunities, Awards, and Honors

Rochelle Hartman

It's been documented that as the economy declines, library use goes up. The irony is that funding for library services goes up. Anyone who has been paying the least bit of attention to library news in the past year knows that hours are being cut, branches closed, positions eliminated, and purchasing frozen.

In times like these, more libraries look to outside sources, such as grants and fundraising, to bolster their shrinking budgets. Government-funded granting agencies and private foundations are no more immune to budget woes than the rest of us, and as a result the axiom “there’s money out there—you just have to find it,” is less reliable. As sources become scarcer and more competitive, those seeking outside funds need to be more vigilant and creative about finding opportunities and more savvy in their approaches to writing grants and proposals. In this column, I am offering up some suggestions and a resource evaluation to help those new to the development and grant game.

If you are one of those people, it won’t take long to figure out that many awards are offered on a yearly basis and others on a rolling basis, several times a year. When you find an announcement, plug the information into your PDA or a database (or put a card in your Rolodex). Even if the award doesn’t seem like a fit at the time, it may be appropriate in the future. Include the deadline, the general scope of the award, and a Web address or other contact information.

Getting Started with Grant Writing

There are several subscription or fee-based resources for locating grant and foundation opportunities in a wide range of prices and formats. Grants for Libraries Hotline (Quinlan) is a relatively inexpensive ($129) monthly print newsletter (with Web updates for subscribers); for more information visit www.grantshotline.com. Initially, I was pleased to see that the library where I work subscribed to this title. However, at least 50 percent of the grants listed are awarded through the American Library Association or were posted in numerous other sources (consortium newsletter and various e-lists). There is also a significant amount of column space given up to “Upcoming Events,” and “News Updates,” items that any practicing public librarian has likely heard about elsewhere, such as upcoming conferences and ALA-sponsored events such as Teen Read Week. There is also considerable repeat from issue to issue and a very limited listing of corporate and foundation grants. I’ve found several grant opportunities listed that are not the best bet for public libraries, such as the National Book Scholarship Fund (NBSF) featured in the October 2002 issue. This fund seeks to provide books and other materials to local literacy programs. If you look at the detailed criteria on their Web site, however, you’ll learn that the NBSF does not award grants to libraries who loan out materials. If you are in a state where literacy initiatives are the specific purview of public libraries, you might find those listings helpful, but many libraries act as literacy partners rather than as literacy agencies.

Libraries with limited development budgets and resources will be better served by a regular check of the ALA Web site http://ala.org/work/awards and some general Web sleuthing. Libraries with larger budgets and dedicated development staff likely already have access to meatier sources. If you are completely new to development, or want to get your feet wet with grant writing, Grants for Libraries Hotline is not a bad place to start. The award stories can provide inspiration for how to be creative with your applications. Just be aware that what is presented in this newsletter is just the tip of the funding iceberg.

For more information, visit www.grantshotline.com or http://ala.org/work/awards.

LSTA Funding Continued

A big sigh of relief was heard across United States libraries in early March 2003, when the House of Representatives approved the continuation of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). Administered through the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), LSTA provides construction and other grants for libraries.

Grant Funds and Awards Available

Books for Children Matching Fund Grants

The Libri Foundation, a nationwide nonprofit organization that donates new, quality children's books to small, rural public libraries, is currently accepting applications for its 2003 Books for Children grants.

Libraries who apply are expected to raise funds from local sponsors, with the Libri Foundation matching donations from $50 to $350 on a two-to-one ratio. Thus, a library can receive new, quality, hardcover children's books worth as much as $1,050, selected by the library, from a list of more than 700 award-winning, classic, and starred-review titles.

In general, libraries that apply should serve a population smaller than ten thousand (usually smaller than five thousand), be in a rural area, have a limited operating budget, and have an active children's department. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, with remaining 2003 deadlines of July 15 and
Corner computers, played games, and acted as role models for the hundreds of children who participate in summer reading activities. Many CYC youth put in more than one hundred volunteer hours over the course of the last school year alone.

The CYC program interested the Helena Foundation because it helps city teenagers build technology and leadership skills. “The Helena Foundation is proud to be able to assist the Pratt library’s Community Youth Corps. We felt that this is a proactive approach to helping young people gain the knowledge they need to succeed in today’s world,” says James Earl, the foundation’s president.

For more information on the Enoch Pratt Free Library, contact the Development Department at (410) 396-5283 or develop@epfl.net.

Library’s Own Story Published

Personal recollections such as the poignant story of a girl’s first library card and a childhood memory of a sled full of books are combined with the struggles and challenges that have shaped the county library in a special publication commemorating Jefferson County (Colo.) Public Library’s fiftieth anniversary.

50 Stories for 50 Years: Stories and History of the Jefferson County Public Library was developed last year and will soon be available in their collection. Fifty outstanding recollections were chosen for the book. Library users and staff members participated. Highlights from the book include an account by the library manager and the county administrator of how the Columbine Library was used during the Columbine High School tragedy in 1999.

Each published contributor received a complimentary copy of the book. A limited number of copies are available for purchase by contacting Kathy Harris, public information coordinator, at (303) 275-2212 or at kharris@jefferson.lib.co.us.

Glendale (Ariz.) Public Library Awarded Grant

Glendale (Ariz.) Public Library was recently awarded a grant of $41,576 for a multimedia collaborative project that will educate homeowners about water-wise landscaping and yard care in a desert environment. The program, “Listening to the Desert: Living in Harmony with Xeriscape Landscaping,” is a cooperative effort with the City of Glendale Water Conservation Office, Historic Sahuaro Ranch, Glendale Community College, and the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension.

According to project coordinator Diane Nevill, the aim of the project “is to educate homeowners to conserve water by incorporating low-water use plants in their landscaping.” The library’s Xeriscape Garden and adjoining Historic Sahuaro Ranch provide the setting for a self-guided audio tour. Other components of the project include a Web site, a five-month schedule of classes, and a collection of print and video resources. Funds were granted by the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records Agency, under LSTA.

For more information, visit www.ci.glendale.az.us/library.

Horror Writers looking for Librarian of the Year

The Horror Writers Association (HWA) has announced the creation of a new honor—the HWA Librarian of the Year Award. The purpose of the award, as posted on the HWA Web site, is to enable horror writers to give “. . . public recognition of the important part librarians play in the lives of every horror writer and every horror reader. Librarians have inculcated the love of reading in many of us since childhood, and their influence on our reading choices can not be overstated. Librarians are among the greatest friends any writer has, and we want to show our gratitude.”

Candidates must be public or school librarians who have done an exemplary job of bringing attention to horror and dark fiction genres to the reading public.

Further information and a nominating form are available from the HWA Web site, www.horror.org/librarianawd.htm.

Grants Awarded and Funds Established

Ralph Nader’s D.C. Library Renaissance Project

Referring to his hometown library, the District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL), consumer advocate and 2000 Presidential candidate Ralph Nader commented, “reading about the state of libraries made me blush with shame.” Citing libraries as the largest influence, aside from his parents, in his long and successful career as a consumer advocate, Nader has founded the D.C. Library Renaissance Project, which aims to raise funds from private sources to help D.C.-area libraries with everything from book budgets to building repairs. A December 2002 dinner netted more than $70,000, with Nader pledging to raise as much as $350,000 over an eighteen-month period.

For more information, visit www.dcpl.org

The information provided in this column is obtained from press releases from libraries, award, and funding agencies. Send announcements to the contributing editor, Rochelle Hartman, 905 N. Madison, Bloomington, IL 61701; rochellesala@yahoo.com.
The Salt Lake City Public Library Zine Collection

Julie Bartel

Including zines in the public library is a great way to attract new patrons, establish relationships with disenfranchised groups, and put into practice the Library Bill of Rights. The six-year-old collection at the Salt Lake City Public Library—perhaps the only such collection in the country—is proof that the inclusion of zines can have an immediate and amazing impact.

A zine, to be really simplistic about it, is a self-published creation usually written by one person and often made using a photocopier at an all-night copy center. Author Chip Rowe describes zines as “cut-and-paste, ‘sorry this is late’ self-published magazines . . . distributed through mail order and word of mouth. [They’re] Tinkertoys for malcontents,” and they are often considered part of an underground movement too radical for mainstream society.  

But the content of zines is actually much broader than you might expect. They can be—and are—about anything: toasters, food, a favorite television show, thrift stores, anarchism, candy, bunnies, architecture, war, gingerbread men—you name it. There are personal zines, music zines, and sports zines, zines about politics, and zines about pop culture. There are even zines about libraries. (I can think of a couple right off: Browsing Room, Nancy’s Magazine, Thoughtworm, Library Bonnet.)

Introduction to the World of Zines

Though often designated (and dismissed) as ephemera, zines are in fact centered around the idea of creating a lasting physical object. Zines are not e-zines—that is, electronic magazines accessed through the Internet. Zines are about paper, about making a tangible material article that can be physically passed from one person to the next. “There is something about the materiality of a zine—you can feel it, stick it in your pocket, read it in the park, give it away at a show . . .” that is integral to zine culture. Zines come in all sizes and shapes, and while many are indeed “cut-and-paste,” others are hand-lettered (A Renegade’s Handbook to Love and Sabotage), produced on a computer (The Voicemaker’s), printed on a letterpress (Ker-Bloom), or typed out on a manual typewriter (metalismorphosis). Zinesters use handmade paper (Brainscan), linoleum block prints (all this is mine), photographs (Say Cheese), and color collage (Xenogenesis) to enhance their work, and while many zines are simply folded in half and stapled in the middle, some are bound with twine (28 Pages Lovingly Bound with Twine), some are held together with intricate metal wiring (Fragile), and some employ the time-tested rubberband (Night Ride Rangers). There is infinite variety to be found in the content, format, and construction of zines, and while the quality may vary, each creation is invariably unique. In fact, “the difficulty of describing zines accurately without generalizations or becoming overly specific reminds us why author Stephen Duncombe states that when someone asks him to describe zines, he would much rather drop a pile of them on a table and let the person make his or her own sense out of the mess.”

You may be asking yourself, “Why would anyone do this? It seems like a huge waste of time and money.” It is. There is no profit to be made in the world of zines and much money, time, and effort to be spent. On the other hand, the satisfaction and gratification of seeing your work in print is well worth the effort, whether you choose to seek a wide readership or not. Zines are about do-it-yourself culture, about adding your voice to the cacophony, and especially, about defining and creating space within the dominant corporate media culture. Author and librarian Chris Dodge describes zines as “a forum for those who don’t like what’s on TV and can’t stand what they read in the daily paper.” Duncombe is a bit more academic about it: “zines, with all their limitations and contradictions, offer up something very important to the people who create and enjoy them: a place to walk to. In the shadows of the dominant culture, zines and underground culture mark out a free space: a space within which to imagine and experiment with new and idealistic ways of thinking, communicating, and being.”

A Brief History

Zines—the word is taken from the term “fanzines” (which is itself a shortened version of “fan magazines”)—have been around in one form or another since at least Shakespeare’s time. Small chapbooks of Shakespeare’s work; Thomas Paine’s pamphlet, Common Sense; and the myriad leaflets published during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could all be considered precursors to the modern zine. Their strongest historical connection, however, is with the science fiction fanzines of the 1930s, in which fans kept beloved serials and characters alive by writing their own stories. This
unique form of self-expression was adopted in the 1970s by the punk movement. True to their do-it-yourself (DIY) reputation, when the mainstream media failed to write and publish what they were looking for, punk kids did it themselves, producing zines that featured interviews, record reviews, personal accounts, and more.

With the rise of cheap and accessible copying—and the spread of the home computer—the “zine revolution” of the early ‘80s took off, and the medium exploded into an underground network of publishers, editors, writers, and artists. What really sparked the movement, however, was the meteoric rise of *Factsheet Five*. *Factsheet Five*, perhaps the most influential zine of all time, began as a one-page, copied tip sheet of the most influential zine of all time, distributed to friends. Within a couple of years it had grown into a full-size magazine with international distribution. “By sending free copies . . . to the editors of zines reviewed in its pages,” Dodge reports, “Gunderloy fos-

tered ‘cross-pollination’ not only among zinesters, but also among all sorts of mail artists, cartoonists, poets, and activists hungry for alternatives to mass-produced media.” These new connections between people “on the fringes” of society turned out to be quite powerful, and the underground publishing movement as we know it today was born. The zine movement has now evolved into a culture of self-expression, political awareness, and eclecticism. From *Sugar Needle* (an international candy review zine) to *Dishwasher* (Dishwasher Pete’s account of his attempt to wash dishes in all fifty states) to *Book of Letters* (corporate defense poet Rich Mackin’s collection of correspondence with corporate America), there is truly a zine for every interest.

### A Short Digression on the Collection of Alternative Materials

The Library Bill of Rights supported by the American Library Association states that “libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view. . . .” I believe that public libraries have a responsibility to aggressively seek out and acquire alternative materials in every subject and media available to them. Self-censorship—or censorship by omission—has no place in a public library. While librarians are trained to select the best publications for their collections, their view of what is the “best” is skewed if they do not include alternative publications in the selection pool.

Corporate conglomeration and current library collection development practices make the acquisition of alternative press materials both problematic and rare. Mainstream media and publishing conglomerates control the market, flooding it with reviews and publicity for their products, while alternative publishers, with fewer resources and contacts, are marginalized. Especially now, when publishing houses are merging and mainstream media is tightening its grip on the public subconscious, it is imperative that libraries remain (or become) “information centers” that provide all kinds of information on all kinds of topics. In order to provide access to as many voices as possible in as many media as possible, public libraries must begin including alternative materials in their collections.

### Glossary of Zine Terminology

**Alternative press:** Publications and materials produced outside the mainstream by independent companies or individuals. Concerned with giving a voice to “marginalized groups, emerging writers and poets,” and unconventional viewpoints.† Sometimes referred to as the independent press or the underground press.

**Distros:** Small distribution enterprises run by individuals or collectives, which sell small press books, chapbooks, zines, crafts, clothing, etc. through catalogs, flyers, and Web sites.

**DIY:** DIY means “do-it-yourself,”‡ and in this context refers to the punk-instigated DIY movement now associated with zines, the underground press, and alternative culture. DIY means shopping at the thrift store and altering clothes to suit you rather than shopping at the mall. It means making your own buttons to publicize your zine or making scented soap to give as gifts.

**Market listing:** A market listing is a particular type of zine that lists publications looking for submissions, advertising possibilities, or reviews.

**Perzine:** A contraction of “personal zine,” meaning a zine primarily concerned with the life and observations of its author.

**Small press:** Also referred to as the “literary press.” Includes the work of minority and underrepresented writers, new writers, the more experimental work of established writers, and often focuses on marginalized or niche genres.

**Zines:** Small, often cut-and-paste, personal publications on any and every subject. Usually produced by an individual, occasionally with a staff of three or four, zines come in all formats, from photocopied and stapled to “art zines” with hand printing and binding.

**Zinesters:** A name given to that amorphous group of people who make zines.


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**So What Are the Benefits of Collecting Zines?**

The roadblocks to alternative material selection for public libraries include outsourcing, acquisition, processing, cataloging problems, availability of ready review resources, personnel hours and expertise involved, and desire. As a result, few libraries engage in dedicated and methodical alternative materials selection. There are a number of ways that collecting alternative materials such as zines can benefit libraries, however, not the least of which is in cultivating new patrons. When considering the inclusion of alternative publications, Atton urges librarians to consider “the audiences at whom such publications are aimed. One of the aims of acquiring alternative publications is to increase the relevance of our libraries to infrequent and non-users.”§ “It’s important that diversity among library patrons should also be reflected in collections,” adds author Bob Nardini. Zines can be an invaluable resource in reaching out to underserved patrons and ensuring materials diversity. There are many marginal-
ized or disenfranchised groups who have been alienated from mainstream culture for one reason or another and who often do not patronize the library. Feminists, environmentalists, anarchists, socialists, racial minorities, gays, lesbians, and the poor are some groups frequently identified as alienated from the mainstream. Lest the subject seem too liberal-leaning, however, we can include in that list survivalists, fundamentalists, libertarians, monastics, and even alternative education proponents. Collecting zines and other alternative publications ensures a more balanced collection, offers patrons more information from a wider variety of viewpoints, and engages previously alienated groups, bringing new patrons to the library.

If Zines Are So Great, Why Don’t More Libraries Collect Them?

Though I believe fervently in collecting alternative materials, practically speaking, it can be difficult to add zines and other alternative publications to a public library collection. Collection development policies, problematic access to materials, cataloging, processing, storage, and publicity are some of the obstacles that librarians will encounter when putting together alternative collections.

Collection Development Policies

One of the first roadblocks in collecting zines is often a library’s—or a librarian’s—own selection development criteria. Most collection development policies do not include the alternative press; rather, they exclude them by their wording and intent. For example, a typical collection development policy often includes the following: “select items useful to patrons” (but with no explanation of what is “useful”); “select based on demand for the material” (even though demand can be manufactured and people can’t demand what they don’t know exists); “select based on the reputation of the author and publisher” (often not known in the case of alternative materials); and “select based on popular appeal and the number and nature of requests from patrons.”

Access to Materials

The second problem is one of access. As Atton writes, “The problem of subject access, of getting a ‘feel’ for such a vast area is very problematic. Hidden from view, not advertised in the trade press, hardly ever reviewed in the ‘quality’ press; how do you find out what is available?” In order to provide zines and other alternative publications, librarians must be truly engaged in the effort and must often be willing to do a lot of extra work in seeking out and in evaluating new materials and formats. Review zines and distros (distributors, discussed in more detail below) provide decent access to a wide variety and staggering number of publications, but the sheer volume of available publications can be overwhelming. Zines are publicized by word of mouth, through e-mail and Web sites, and especially through old-fashioned snail mail, and librarians must be willing and able to devote time to cultivating relationships in order to successfully access materials. Personal networking within the alternative community is perhaps the most common and effective way of gathering selection information, but it definitely takes more work, and much more time, than simply highlighting reviews out of Publishers Weekly.

Cataloging, Processing, Storage, and Publicity

Once the materials have been acquired, librarians face a whole new set of problems. Cataloging and processing, storage and publicity issues are all among the most troublesome. Since independent publications rarely have ready cataloging records (and zines pretty much never), they require extra effort to add to any library system. Zines, in fact, far from having CIP information or an ISSN often do not even have a consistent title, page numbers, or a cover date. (Sometimes there’s not even a name, address, or price.) Truly creative processing is therefore required in order to retain access to items once they are in the building. Questions of cataloging and processing are usually best answered by individual libraries who can gauge the effectiveness of various options, such as creating single MARC records for a collection or actually creating original cataloging records for new acquisitions, a massive undertaking that is probably not worth the effort. (My experiences and conclusions are detailed in the following section.)

The SLCPL Zine Collection

Though the Salt Lake City Public Library’s (SLCPL) collection development policy always affirmed support for selecting alternative press materials, in 1997 I decided to ask for a small budget to add alternative magazines to the larger periodicals collection. Though my colleague Brooke Young and I originally planned to create an alternative press collection, we soon realized that it would simply be too expensive and unwieldy and we shifted our focus exclusively to zines (while still promoting the active collection of alternative materials in all formats.) Six years later, we have created an ever-expanding archival zine collection, comprised of sample copies, subscriptions, and reference materials, which has garnered strong interest and support, locally and in the larger zine community as well.

Currently, the collection includes more than 3,400 sample copies, 17 subscriptions, and more than 20 reference books. Due to the incredibly large number of zines being produced, we decided early on to collect sample copies of as many zines as possible, rather than limiting ourselves to a few subscriptions. While the bulk of the collection is made up of single copies of individual zines, we do subscribe to a number of review...
zines—that is, zines devoted to reviewing other zines—and market listings, which we use for selection and ordering, and which are available for patrons to use as well. The reference books that are shelved alongside the zines are another important part of the collection. Besides a subscription to the Alternative Press Index, the library has collected anthologies, how-to books, and academic works on zines and the alternative press. None of the materials in this main collection circulate, including the books, which are generally duplicated elsewhere in the library. However, we recently added small circulating zine collections at all five of our branches, as well as in the teen department at the main library. These collections are designed to attract teens, and we select the circulating zines by comparing zine content to other teen materials.

Starting a Zine Collection: SLCPL’s Do-It-Yourself Guide

Okay, you’re convinced. Zines are for you, and you want to start up a collection of your own. But where to begin? Here are some things that we’ve learned along the way that might help you start your own zine collection.

Proposal

First, in order to start a zine collection you must have at least two things: zines and somewhere to put them. It is possible to put a collection together without monetary support (since many zinesters will donate zines to a permanent collection), but it would be difficult to maintain a collection without administrative support, which is reason enough to send a formal proposal to the powers that be. My original proposal included a short section with facts and figures and my reasons for requesting funding. We asked for a corner of the periodicals department reading room, which (after minimal shifting) was not being used or occupied. We asked for permission to raid the basement for discarded display shelves or other suitable furniture. We asked for $500 a year for sample copies, $250 a year for subscriptions, and $100 a year for programming. These amounts were more or less random at the time, since we didn’t really know what we were doing. Finally, we asked for staff time to work on the collection. Five years later, this includes fellow librarian Brooke Young—a crucial partner in this endeavor—as well as interested aides and volunteers.

Ordering

The sheer number of titles involved argues for a collection of sample copies rather than subscriptions. We try to order zines of every type, covering every subject, from countries all over the world. We order from a wide variety of sources and use a number of different tactics to find and pay for zines. Though you may be able to find zines locally, depending on the size and character of your community, chances are that you will order the majority of zines from various sources, including review zines, distros, and word of mouth.

Review Zines

Review zines are basically zines that review other zines (see sidebar for examples). Reviews are usually contributed by a number of different reviewers, and each review includes contact information, cost, and payment options. We use Xerography Debt and A Reader’s Guide to the Underground Press, for example, in the same way other departments use Booklist and Library Journal.

Distros

Distros—indeed, super-small businesses that serve as informal distribution centers—are another good source for zines, as well as an interesting enterprise in and of themselves. Usually set up by an individual zinester or a small collective, distros can carry a wide array of products, such as zines, stickers, buttons, patches, clothing, jewelry, and music. Most distros have an online catalog and at least a couple of different payment options (checks, cash, occasionally electronic payment systems like PayPal), which makes them ideal for placing large orders. When you have $500 to spend on sample copies, and you have to write a letter and cut a $2 check for each zine, spending $50 in one shot at a distro is a lifesaver. A good distro includes reviews of every zine in stock, as well as ordering instructions and postage calculations. A great distro is updated frequently (so that availability notes are accurate) and includes cover scans of each zine and quotes from other review sources. Distros do occasionally close or go on hiatus, and since they are often run as a side enterprise, service can be slow, but reputable distros (see sidebar on next page) will dazzle you with their inventory, efficiency, and helpfulness.

Word of Mouth

Becoming familiar with the underground community in your area is invaluable in collecting zines, so pick up an alternative newspaper, attend an art show or concert, talk to patrons or colleagues, and get a feel for the places they hang out and the events that interest them. Connecting with even one local zinester can lead to numerous introductions and referrals, and once the word gets out that you’re building a collection, they’ll come to you.

A second word-of-mouth source is the electronic zine community. Electronic chat lists such as the zinesters list (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/zinesters) and zine geeks (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/zinegeeks) often include “shameless plugs” for recently completed zines, and they keep you in touch with zine community politics, discussions, and
Zine Distros

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<td>Frida Loves Diego</td>
<td>2527 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60647</td>
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<td><a href="http://implicate.net/mad">http://implicate.net/mad</a></td>
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<td>Moon Potatoes Zine Distro</td>
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<td>Moon Rocket</td>
<td>P.O. Box 7754, Wellesley St., Auckland, NZ</td>
<td><a href="http://www.moonrocket.co.nz">www.moonrocket.co.nz</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pander: A Mailorder Catalog</td>
<td>P.O. Box 582142, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2142</td>
<td><a href="http://www.panderzinedistro.com">www.panderzinedistro.com</a></td>
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<td>Pisces Catalog</td>
<td>369 South Doheny Dr., #106, Beverly Hills, CA</td>
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<td><a href="http://violeteyes.net/screanqueen">http://violeteyes.net/screanqueen</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.starfiend.com">www.starfiend.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stickfigure Distro and Mailorder</td>
<td>P.O. Box 55462, Atlanta, GA 30308</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stickfiguredistro.com">www.stickfiguredistro.com</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.geocities.com/yellowcaperev">www.geocities.com/yellowcaperev</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth in Revolt Distro</td>
<td>P.O. Box 268, Loleta, CA 95551</td>
<td><a href="http://distro.lhabia.com">http://distro.lhabia.com</a></td>
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Payment

Paying for your zines is the next step, and you’ll need to be creative and flexible in order to make the zine payment system work for your library. There are a number of accepted forms of payment within the zine community: cash, stamps, trades, and sometimes checks or money orders. “Well-concealed cash” is the most common form of payment, and since zine prices are generally between fifty cents and a couple bucks, sending cash is a great option if your institution allows it. Though you may be hesitant to send cash through the mail, it is the accepted method of payment in the zine community, and we, at least, have never had a problem.

Stamps are often requested either in addition to, or in lieu of, cash. “Send two stamps and $1” is a common request, and those stamps are a necessary part of payment. Spend some time becoming acquainted with the postal service, especially with different types of stamps or coupons, and if possible, keep a supply on hand.

Though not really applicable to a library setting, trades are a form of payment so pervasive and so characteristic of the zine community that you should be aware of them. This is basically the barter system—I’ll send you my zine if you send me yours—and it’s utilized by people who want to collect zines as well as create them. Trades are expected to be fair—you can’t trade a small ten-page zine for a larger fifty-page zine and not expect trouble—but other than that, it’s pretty much anything goes. You can also trade things, or trade for things, besides zines. Mixed tapes, for example, are commonly exchanged for zines.

Finally, sometimes there is just no substitute for writing a check, even though they often present difficulties. For example, not all zine listings include a full (or even real) name, and if they do, many zinesters do not accept checks; either they don’t have a bank account or they do not want to risk depositing checks that might bounce. We contact zinesters by letter or e-mail and get permission to send a check—as well as the correct name to send it to—before assuming that it’s all right. In almost every case, checks should be made out to the individual rather than the zine title, a practice that may go against library policy or create other bookkeeping problems. If it’s not possible to send a check, money orders are another good option, provided you can spare the time to go and get them and you can cover the service charge without too much trouble.

Processing and Organization

Once you have some zines, the trick is to turn them into an accessible collection,
which can be more difficult than expected. First, you need to decide how to keep track of your zines. Depending on your system and your cataloging scheme we’re using now is fairly simple, and we’ve tried to keep the number of categories low (right now we have about thirty.) For each title, we assign a primary category heading (where the zine will live on the shelf) and as many secondary headings as are appropriate (so that we can run cross-referenced lists), then we add these to the publication title record in our database.

While not a perfect solution, keeping a separate database and assigning our own subject headings has allowed us the flexibility to track the collection and arrange it to best suit our patrons. Since our main collection is being kept as an archive (another decision you need to make when you enter into this) it’s important for us to know what we have, how we got it, and where it goes. At the very least, our database is invaluable in tracking what we’ve spent—when you’re dealing with a couple hundred $1 and $2 transactions, the math can get pretty darn tedious.

Finding creative ways to shelve and display zines is imperative, since conventional methods will often not accommodate the weird and wonderful creations you’ll receive.

The problem of tracking orders and accessing the collection remains, and there are certainly multiple ways of dealing with it. One of my colleagues created a database for us, which we use to track orders, balance the budget, organize the collection, and manage information. (We use Microsoft Access, but there are a number of other database programs that would work just as well.) We use this database to keep track of our money, to centralize information, to run holdings lists, and to categorize the collection. Though the database is not currently available to the public, we hope at some point to link it to the library Web site so that patrons can search the collection online.

The problem of access (and by extension, shelving) is, honestly, a thorny one, and one which we haven’t really solved successfully at this point. The new main city library building was finished in February 2003, and when we moved into the new building, space for the collection tripled and we gained much more appropriate shelving units. After years of discussion, we have decided to assign subject headings to the zines and to shelf them accordingly. The problem of access (and by extension, shelving) is, honestly, a thorny one, and one which we haven’t really solved successfully at this point. The new main city library building was finished in February 2003, and when we moved into the new building, space for the collection tripled and we gained

Finding creative ways to shelve and display zines is imperative, since conventional methods will often not accommodate the weird and wonderful creations you’ll receive.

Reference books and display zines

Publicity and Programming

As with any new addition to the library, once you have a collection together you need to get the word out. With zines, however, this can prove challenging since the majority of people who will be interested in the collection are probably not regular library patrons. This means that you need to take publicity materials (and even programs, if appropriate) to the places where potential patrons live: coffee shops, art spaces, bookstores, cafes, concerts and shows, political functions, schools, and even tattoo parlors.

We regularly hold zine open-house nights where zinesters can gather to see our new additions, trade their own zines, crafted and is filled with “extras” such as sparkles, small plastic trinkets, stickers, playing cards, and the like—while other zines arrive with a companion CD, which can be anything from a spoken word recording to music by the zinester’s band. We hated to break up either the presentation or the pieces, and in the past simply kept these zines in the back room. In our new space we are able to shelf them using hanging bags, like the ones used for children’s book and tape kits, thus keeping them together and safe but allowing access for the first time.

Finding creative ways to shelve and display zines is imperative, since conventional methods will often not accommodate the weird and wonderful creations you’ll receive. As mentioned above, SLCPL’s zine collection has considerably more space in our new building, and this has solved a number of shelving and display issues for us. For example, one of our biggest problems had been what to do with our “special collection” category—zines that are particularly fragile or come in lots of pieces. Some zines arrive looking like a piece of art—the envelope or package is unique or hand-
make connections, and give input into the collection. We alternate the basic “make your own zine” workshop with a more advanced session on distribution and publicity, and occasionally we present workshops or discussions that suit specific groups. We visit many high school classes, and recently did an amazingly successful workshop for ten- to twelve-year-olds. One new (and gratifying) connection we’ve made is with the Homeless Youth Resource Center, where the kids just released the third issue of their group zine, SLC Streetz.

Our most successful program has probably been the workshop and readings we held in July 2002 with special guests Rich Mackin, creator of the zine Book of Letters and author of the newly released book, Dear Mr. Mackin, and Rosie Streetpixie, a sixteen-year-old activist with a number of zines to her credit, most recently One Ear to the Ground. We held two workshop sessions at the library—the first on activism and the second on creating a zine—and then moved to a local art space for evening readings. Rich and Rosie were amazing, the discussions were brilliant and engaging, and the reading was a rousing success. We had a great crowd at both events—about sixty people each—and while programs here regularly attract anywhere from twenty to six hundred people, the quality of the discussion at this event, and the visible impact the workshops had on the group, is much more significant than the numbers themselves.

While zines are not a teen medium per se, the freedom they allow and the creativity they encourage are exceptionally fascinating to that age group, and zine programs seem to have an especially intense impact. Not only do teen participants learn from the zine programming, they go away with a completely new perception of the library and the possibilities it represents. We regularly hear enthusiastic comments such as “I can’t believe the library did this! This library is the coolest library ever!” and “I can’t believe the library has zines. That is so cool!” and “You guys are the coolest hottie librarians of all time!” Hearing comments like that from a teen you’ve never seen before, or a young punk with blue hair and many piercings, or a totally disenfranchised young man who was positive that the library had nothing to offer him—well, that’s what makes collecting zines worth the effort.

A final example: recently I received an e-mail from one of the students in the first high school class for which we did a workshop. She wrote, “Do you realize that you and Susie [our teen librarian] saved my life by coming into my classroom with a stack of zines? I don’t think any physical realm could illustrate the vibrancy and anticipation that beamed through my body that day (and every day since).” She, like many of her classmates, assumed that the library had nothing to offer her in the way of materials or community, and consequently she had not visited for years. I’m happy to report that since then she has become not only part of the zine community, but a member of the library community as well, and not just as a patron; after volunteering here for a couple of months, she was hired as a library aide, and she sent this message to me at the end of her first week of work. For me, this is what library work is really all about.

References

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It’s Not Easy Being Green, But It Sure Is Fun
Sustainability Programming at the Ann Arbor District Library

Amy Cantú and Beth Andersen

The Ann Arbor District Library presented a month-long series of adult and children’s programming based on sustainability. “Sustaining Ann Arbor: Think Globally, Act Locally” targeted people of all ages and socioeconomic circumstances who are interested in preserving the earth’s resources by making changes at home.

Gordon Gekko, the antiheroic paragon of greed, played to Oscar-winning perfection by Michael Douglas in Oliver Stone’s 1987 movie Wall Street, was off by one letter. Green, Mr. Gekko, is good, not greed. Green, a term whose more formal, less politically suspect counterpart is sustainable, is gaining ground in the nation’s awareness. Tapping into a growing national interest in headline-grabbing stories such as the fate of the Kyoto Treaty and drilling for oil in Alaskan land reserves, the Ann Arbor District Library sponsored a month-long series of programs and events in May 2002 on sustainability.

The seed for this series grew out of several conversations among library staff members about each of our individual efforts to live an environmentally careful lifestyle. In looking at interactions at the library’s reference desk, we saw a recurring theme—a number of our patrons wanted alternatives to the local landfill when disposing of old doors, windows, and appliances and to the basement utility sink when disposing of toxic household substances. Many Ann Arbor residents were unaware of local resources that answer that need. A case in point: patrons were surprised to learn about one of Ann Arbor’s best-kept secrets, the ReUse Center, a bargain-basement warehouse of everything from used building materials to electronic equipment, furniture, and appliances, run by the not-for-profit Recycle Ann Arbor.

These encounters were enough to get staff members talking about our mutual interest in the far-reaching subject of sustainability and how we might bring some of these resources to light. After some discussion, we decided to propose a series of programs in which attendees could consider, for example, the broader implications of recycling and renewable energy or where residence water runoff goes once it reaches the street sewer. Finally, our interest was buoyed by Ann Arbor’s recent participation as a preconference site for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainability held in Johannesburg, Africa.

The library proved to be an ideal environment for exploring such a broad, interconnected topic as sustainability, not only because of its position as a community center and its reputation as an educational resource in its own right, but also because of the library’s mission-driven commitment to “reuse and recycle” through its materials-lending policy.

The curse and the blessing of designing the sustainability series was its wide-ranging possibilities. Defining sustainability was our first challenge. A certain oxymoronic aura surrounds sustainability—its scope is huge, and yet it is not exactly a household word. We were approached by so many colleagues who, having heard about the project, asked us what is sustainability, that we knew we would have to make the idea more accessible.

Our working definition, “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” paved the way for considering programs that could encompass such topics as sustainable buildings, simplifying the way people live, and recycling. The advantage of such a general definition is that it opened the door for finding potential community partners from the many educational, environmental, governmental, cultural, and social organizations in Ann Arbor.

After identifying potential topics, the next step was to pull together a community-based committee to help strike the right balance of fun (yet also educational) programs that could introduce and expand this complex idea without becoming too cerebral. We had an array of candidates, including the local food cooperative; regional environmental clubs; and a variety of city and county groups with an interest in ecology, recycling, energy, and conservation. Indeed,
the list was so long that we needed to be selective to keep the committee to a reasonable size. One of our selection criteria was to include organizations that have a programming component; or, better yet, organizations that employ a programming coordinator who is familiar with local resources and is committed to educating the public.

For instance, one of the obvious community partnerships we wanted to nurture was with the University of Michigan, which owns the Nichols Arboretum, a 123-acre “living museum.” We knew the arboretum ran many nature-related programs throughout the year, so we were optimistic that they would want to participate.

We finally decided to invite, by formal letter, the Ann Arbor Recycle Center, the University of Michigan’s Center for Sustainable Systems, the University of Michigan’s Nichols Arboretum, the Ann Arbor City Energy Office, and the Leslie Science Center. Additionally, to help with the home tour, we later brought on board our local chapter of the American Institute of Architects. And finally, library staff members included Josie Barnes Parker, library director; Tim Grimes, community relations manager; Sherry Roberts, youth librarian; and J. D. Lindeberg, Ann Arbor District Library Board trustee, who at the start of our planning phase was working on a board subcommittee to consider a sustainable design for our new Malletts Creek branch library. (Since then, the library approved a design and has broken ground.)

At our very first planning session, which met just days after September 11, 2001, we started with the noticeable shift in our community’s political and social focus and concluded that an investigation into who we are and how we live in America today was all the more relevant to our programming initiative. The challenge was not “What are we going to do?” but rather “What are we not going to do?”

We also wanted to avoid two pitfalls: (1) making the series sound too political, and (2) reaching only a small “preaching to the converted” crowd. In the end, we decided to focus on the all-inclusive home front, which, after all, is where sustainability begins. People of all ages and socioeconomic circumstances can do things to preserve resources and reduce their ecological footprint. It is often the case that, after establishing that mindset at home, people want to expand their efforts outward into the community and beyond.

Our theme, “Sustaining Ann Arbor: Think Globally, Act Locally,” emerged from our vision. We hoped that its universal appeal would draw not only those who knew something—anything—about the topic of sustainability but also those who were curious about this unfamiliar subject and wanted to learn more.

We brainstormed dozens of potential programming ideas, ranging from puppet shows and a public forum on sustainable living in Ann Arbor to more ambitious ideas. Ann Arbor is a big “home tours” kind of town. Several are held each year and enjoy wide popularity. We hoped there would be enough owners of alternative homes willing to participate in such a venture to make it worthwhile.

We also knew that alternative-fuel vehicle shows were a big draw. More than 500 residents of Ann Arbor own such cars. The local Environmental Protection Agency facility had a large crowd at their 2001 Earth Day car show, despite inclement weather, so we added that idea to the list.

Since our target month was May, we wanted to reach the countless avid gardeners whose enthusiastic devotion to their avocation results in a community that explodes with colorful botanical wonders every spring and summer. Several possible speakers came to mind.

We quickly agreed to a rousing kick-off and to adult and youth programming based on the theme that it’s never too late (or too soon) to begin thinking about how life choices regarding the environment and sustainability affect one’s future. We chose James Crowfoot,
professor emeritus of the University of Michigan School of Natural Science and Urban and Regional Planning, as our kick-off speaker.

Another boost to our plans was committee member David Konkle, Ann Arbor’s energy commissioner. He was able to pull in a few city vehicles for the alternative-fuel vehicle show and was instrumental in securing space for the show in the city parking lot next to the library.

The real work began after our committee settled on the programs. There were the usual publicity deadlines, contacting and securing speakers and panel participants, arranging for equipment and room set-ups, and handling last-minute changes. Logistically, the most challenging program by far was the sustainable home tour (see “Program Highlights,” on the following page).

We held approximately three programs a week for four weeks, with programs generally falling on Wednesday or Thursday evenings or Saturday during the day. Activities included:

- A kick-off event featuring food, music, and a lecture
- An alternative-fuel vehicle show
- A talk by a local landscape architect on environmentally friendly landscaping ideas
- A local tour of native plant gardens
- A puppet show for families on wildlife ecology
- A panel discussion with citizens and city and county officials titled “Sustainable Living in Ann Arbor”
- A craft program for kids on making toys from recycled materials
- A tour of homes exploring the grassroots of sustainable home design and technology
- A film and discussion on the PBS documentary “Escape from Affluenza”
- A talk by a local architect intern on green building design in Europe

Publicity

The Ann Arbor District Library employed a multipronged publicity blitz to get the word out about the series. Our graphic artist designed two key pieces of promotional material to advertise the calendar of events. Using an appropriate, earth-toned color scheme, the 14” x 24” posters and the 6” x 9” postcards were printed on recycled paper using soy ink. The decorative border designs featured plants native to the area’s Huron River Valley that bloom in May. (The careful attention to theme-related details was so successful that the Ann Arbor District Library won first place in its division in the event calendar category of the Michigan Library Association’s 2002 Best of Show.) The postcards were mailed to members of the Friends of the Library as well as targeted local groups.

We prominently displayed program information on our Web site and developed a bibliography that formed the basis for an oft-visited display of books and videos. We also made use of personal contacts with environmental activists and local organizations who expressed delighted surprise at the library’s interest in this field. They hap-

Another Perspective

The Missoula Public Library Helps Build a Sustainable Community

Betty Wing

Missoula (Mont.) Public Library celebrated National Library Week in April 2002 by incorporating the Libraries Build Sustainable Communities initiative into the activities. Planning and implementation was done in conjunction with the Sustainability Alliance of Western Montana and the Missoula-area Sustainable Business Council. There were so many topics to explore, the celebration extended to the entire month of April.

The Sustainability Alliance provided speakers for four public discussions on Sunday afternoons. The topics were:

1. Put down roots @ your library (information about community supported agriculture and other sustainable growing issues)
2. The wheels turn @ your library (discussion of transportation patterns and alternative transportation options for Missoula, with two hybrid electric cars on display in the parking lot)
3. Saving energy @ your library (discussion of the effect of energy consumption on global warming, followed by a discussion of energy efficiency, including ways to use alternative energy sources and building materials)
4. Living simply @ your library (ideas on how living simply will improve our lives and our planet)

In addition to these public events, the Missoula-area Sustainable Business Network held its April meeting at the library. The speaker’s topic was building a sustainable business. On Monday of Library Week, Sandra Perrin signed her newly revised book, Organic Gardening in Cold Climates. For relaxing @ your library, Thursday evening the staff hosted a tea in the atrium with refreshments and live music, using all local food products and nondisposable dishes and utensils. The final event of Library Week was “Native America speaks @ your library.” Missoula Public Library was proud to present Jack Gladstone, local Native American musician and storyteller, with a multimedia presentation.

Throughout the month, the library sponsored displays throughout the building on ecological footprints, the seven wonders of simplicity (from Seven Wonders: Everyday Things for a Healthier Planet by John C. Ryan), the economic benefits of supporting local businesses with products and advertising from local businesses, sustainable transportation and energy, Native American culture, and a bulletin board with the top-ten ways to live simply. The library added a number of books on sustainability and displayed the entire collection. A hand-out with all the titles listed was made available. Contests and prizes incorporated the sustainability theme.

The activities were well received. The Sustainability Alliance of Western Montana and the Missoula-area Sustainable Business Council were excellent partners and were thrilled to have their message before the public in the busy Missoula Public Library.

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A series of flyers was distributed to several area businesses and landmarks with “green” appeal, such as the farmer’s market, the People’s Food Co-Op (their support extended to providing refreshments at our grand opening), the Community Farm, and a shoe store whose sideline is selling small electric in-town vehicles and e-bicycles.

Community Television Network, Ann Arbor’s local access station, sent cameras to one of the events. The station then aired the segment several times over a two-week period. The local daily, The Ann Arbor News, also ran several stories about the various programs. Word-of-mouth proved to be quite effective for publicity. On several occasions, participants at one program would appear at one or more subsequent events with friends or neighbors in tow.

**Program Highlights**

The opening reception, which drew more than eighty-five people, was a model of sustainability. The People’s Food Co-Op prepared cookies and delicious fruit bars (some of which were vegan) and provided several pots of fair-trade (a.k.a sustainable) coffee. We were partially successful in making the food service as green as possible. We used paper plates and napkins made from recycled paper and had gathered up enough silverware to meet our patrons’ needs. Beverages, however, were served in throwaway cups. The Huron River Found Objects Orchestra, a group of musicians and craftspeople from the Ann Arbor area, used homemade instruments and recycled objects to make surprisingly beautiful music. Dr. Crowfoot delivered a sobering yet hopeful speech about the state of the planet and the need for its urgent care.

About a dozen alternative-fuel vehicles parked in the municipal parking lot adjacent to the Main Library for a car show that was sponsored by the city’s energy office. Ann Arbor’s Downtown Development Authority donated several parking spaces. Cars from area dealerships, privately owned vehicles, and even a county work truck drew a sizable crowd all day.

Shannan Gibb-Randall, a local landscape architect, presented “How Green Is Your Yard.” Her witty, fact-filled slide presentation offered several low-cost, low-maintenance, attractive alternatives to the Evils of Lawn.

The children’s programs were particularly successful. The Pippin Puppets performed “Welcome to Camp Living Room,” a charming family-oriented interactive puppet show exploring wildlife ecology. The Scrap Box, an innovative not-for-profit organization begun in 1983, takes discarded, nontoxic factory and business materials and sells them, in bulk, at their facility. It is heavily used by area arts and crafts teachers as well as by parents who bring their children for on-site activities. During their program, “Out of This World Creations,” Scrap Box staff showed the children how to make spaceships from their supplies. The alternative homes tour was, by far, the most labor-intensive event. Attention had to be paid to a daunting list of details, such as:

- the careful wording of a legal waiver that had to be signed by each registrant
- parking considerations at each site
- booties to avoid tracking dirt through the hosts’ homes
- street signs directing participants to each home
- the recruitment of informed docents at each location
- the production of a brochure with a map and a description of each dwelling

Our home tour cosponsors, the Huron Valley chapter of the American Institute of Architects and ReCycle Ann Arbor, were full partners in this venture, offering invaluable guidance and manpower. In several cases, owners of the home were present and were most gracious and patient in explaining the many sustainable features.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the new, sustainable Mallets Creek Branch Library was scheduled midway through the series. The library’s design includes a vegetative roof; energy-efficient heating, cooling, and lighting elements; and innovative landscaping that reduces the amount of groundwater that will drain into a nearby creek.

**Conclusion**

In looking back on the series, we discovered we had tapped a need in our community for this kind of cohesive programming. Program after program, we were surprised and delighted by the unprecedented interest of our attendees.
and presenters. Our public relations department reported that they were pleasantly surprised by how consistently high our attendance numbers were, given that it was a month-long series on an untested topic. Audience participation following several of the events was so lively, we had to gently remind all in attendance that the library had closed for the day and they would have to leave.

By concentrating on the practicalities of day-to-day green living, we were able to avoid both pitfalls mentioned earlier. Judging by the mix of participants from all socioeconomic backgrounds and age levels, politics and exclusivity were not in the foreground. We learned from the comments of the participants who kept coming back for more programs that they were excited about all the new things they were learning and were eager for more such events.

Also, when we put out a request to a dozen organizations for relevant pamphlets or information sheets, we were inundated with boxes of giveaways, which we displayed during every event. At the end of the series, not much was left, but we were able to include some of the surplus in our pamphlet file. The rest was put into our year-round giveaway racks.

We took thorough notes on what worked particularly well in the series, and these, along with suggestions culled from our partners and contacts with other outside groups, generated several ideas for programs on similar topics in the future.

Last, but by no means least, good publicity and administrative support are the keys to a successful series on an untested topic. Those two essential components made it possible for us to bring together a number of disparate social and professional organizations for a variety of community programs on a complex topic that was nothing short of collection development and bibliographic instruction of the third kind.

We learned that it is possible to choose a topic this risky because it means something to the planners, to the library, and to one’s community. This simple conviction—so hard to engender, yet also, paradoxically, so easy to embrace once the proper decisions are made—can make all the difference.
Oklahoma's Certification for Public Librarians Program and the Institute in Public Librarianship

June Lester and Connie Van Fleet

In collaboration with the state’s professional community, and using LSTA funding, the Oklahoma Department of Libraries developed an integrated program to provide sustained, appropriate training for library personnel in the public libraries of the state. Four critical characteristics—teamwork, accessibility, commitment, and synergy—contributed to the success of the approach. Elements of the Oklahoma program may be adaptable by other states with similar personnel challenges.

The majority of public libraries in Oklahoma are small and rural. Of the 112 established public libraries in the state, 99 serve populations of fewer than 25,000, and the overwhelming majority of these libraries (69%) serve populations of fewer than 5,000. In the state as a whole, 73% of public libraries have no MLS-degreed librarian on staff, and given the limited budgets that such small libraries have, this situation is not likely to change.

Nevertheless, the personnel in these small public libraries are committed to quality service for their constituents, and many recognize the need for training to enable them to provide it.

A Three-Part Educational Program

The education and certification program implemented by the Oklahoma Library Association (OLA) and the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL) is based in the vision that public libraries in Oklahoma be administered and staffed by trained personnel. Continuing education is necessary to ensure that librarians keep abreast of developments in the information age. This in turn upgrades the library profession, enriches the individual librarians, and promotes quality library services.

The original goals of the program were to:

1. improve library service throughout the state;
2. motivate public librarians to acquire, maintain, and develop their skills through basic and continuing education;
3. recognize public librarians who, on a continuing basis, update their knowledge and skills in order to provide better library services to their patrons;
4. improve the public image of librarians and libraries;
5. provide guidelines for public library boards and supervisors to use in selecting and retaining personnel; and
6. aid in structuring library educational programs to better meet the educational needs of librarians.

To address the need for accessible, sustained, and appropriate training, a three-part program was initiated in January 1997 under the joint auspices of OLA and ODL, following an extensive planning period of more than four years. The program is comprised of:

- the Certification for Public Librarians program (CPL), to ensure basic skills and knowledge and their continuous upgrading;
- the Institute in Public Librarianship (IPL), to ensure basic skills and knowledge of basic concepts; and
- the Conference Grants Program (CGP), to provide opportunities for updating skills and to foster a broader professional outlook.

The program operates under the oversight of a certification board, whose members include an ODL certification specialist who administers the certification process, two OLA appointees, and two ODL appointees. Board appointments are made to ensure broad representation in terms of library size, administrative structure, and location.

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and professional credentials of individual members.

Certification for Public Librarians Program

The certification program is coordinated with ODL’s minimum standards for library personnel and is a voluntary program, although some public library boards require it for designated categories of staff. It consists of certification at seven levels, moving from eligibility based primarily on successful completion of IPL to an ALA-accredited master’s degree combined with additional education and experience. The certification is renewed every three years through completion of four standard continuing-education units, three hours of approved college course work, or the IPL advanced curriculum.

Institute in Public Librarianship

Certification may be obtained at the first three levels (differentiated by years of appropriate library experience) through completion of the IPL basic curriculum. The basic curriculum is comprised of seven classes (one class of three contact hours on history and philosophy and six classes of six contact hours) and is designed to provide essential knowledge and skills (see sidebar). The classes are offered without charge to participants on a yearly schedule, approximately half in spring and half in fall, and each class is offered in several different geographical locations or in digital format when appropriate. An advanced curriculum, comprised of eight advanced-level classes (three six-hour and five three-hour), was added to IPL in August 2000, and may be used for renewal of certification (see sidebar).

Individuals who are certified (most of whom hold an MLS) and have expertise in the relevant area teach courses that follow a standard outline of topics and have a common set of educational outcome objectives. Class developers, who work under the guidance of the ODL certification specialist, are compensated for their work, as are those who deliver the instruction. From the beginning of IPL in 1997 through December 2001, a total of 296 classes were delivered, with the current annual number now in the forty-five to fifty range.

Conference Grants Program

As a companion to the certification and institute programs, ODL has, since 1998, supported a conference grants program that provides recipients support for professional association membership and conference attendance. To qualify for a grant, applicants must be employed in an Oklahoma public or institutional library, hold certification, and fall under a salary cap. Additional requirements related to conference attendance have varied. From 1998 through 2001, 108 grants were made to support attendance at OLA, American Library Association, Mountain Plains Library Association, Public Library Association, and Texas Library Association conferences (see table 1).

Assessment and Change

CPL and IPL have been assessed and modified on an ongoing basis since they were initiated. Changes implemented in August 2001 included a revised structure for the certification program and institute classes and the addition of an advanced institute. The advanced-level classes may be applied toward certification renewal or to earn a designation of “with distinction” to level I, II, and III certificates.

Funding

One of the goals in the state’s LSTA long-range plan reads:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>No. of Grants Award</th>
<th>Amount of Grant ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>OLA</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Public Library Assn.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>American Library Assn., Mountain Plains Library Assn.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Public Library Assn.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Texas Library Assn., Mountain Plains Library Assn., American Library Assn.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Two were half grants.
these programs. If the salary of the certification specialist who plans and administers the program were added to the funding directly supporting these projects, the total percentage over the four years would be less than 5%, still a very small percentage of the overall funds.

**Participation**

As of March 2001, 310 librarians had been certified, 221 of whom were certified through IPL. These 221 came from 4 of the 8 public library systems in the state and 31 of the 104 independent public libraries. As might be predicted, participation has been greater in libraries serving larger population groups (see table 2).

A high percentage of those certified long enough to require renewal have chosen to do so. Of librarians certified and still employed in public libraries in Oklahoma as of March 2001, all but four renewed their certification, an effective retention rate in the certification program of 88%.

Participation in the institute is more widespread than suggested by the number of libraries that currently have certified staff, indicating that with time the share of libraries with certified staff will grow. Six of the 8 public library systems and 80 of the 104 independent public libraries have staff who are participating or who have participated in institute classes, a total of 541 individuals (see table 3). Of the 77 counties in the state, only 8 do not have libraries with staff participating in the institute.

**Is the Program Meeting the Personnel Challenge?**

*It opens up a whole new world to you...*

As part of an evaluation of the use of LSTA funds, an in-depth evaluation of CPL and IPL was conducted. Available documentation was reviewed, including extensive factual and statistical data prepared by ODL. Data were then gathered from institute participants through a Web-based survey, from participants and others in the library community in focus group sessions, and through interviews.

The survey and focus groups were designed to assess changes in (1) individual philosophy and self-concept; (2) attitudes toward continuing education and professional organizations; (3) library administration and support; and (4) direct service to the library’s constituents. The strongest testimony to the impact of the program is found in the words of the participants themselves. Their responses to the survey and in focus group sessions are quoted in italics throughout the following sections.

**Impact on Individual Philosophy and Self-Concept**

It's a whole lot more than that. And I think [the certification program] helps you realize the importance of behaving as a professional. We can be friendly and we can know our patrons, but we need to do our jobs in a professional manner if we want respect.

Survey data suggested that the program has had a striking impact on how the participants think about themselves and their work. They consider themselves more knowledgeable (94%), more effective (83%), more confident (80%), more professional (79%), and more efficient (79%). Confidence and validation (reaffirming) were two outcomes that frequently were offered by focus group respondents, voiced either explicitly (“I have more confidence that I can find the answer”) or implicitly (“I would never have done this before,” “I have a feeling of accomplishment”). “I feel more professional in my job” was a response that was repeated.

One especially strong effect of the increase in confidence has been growth in the quality and volume of communication activities at all levels. The participants appear to be much more aware of themselves as members of a professional community, and they network accordingly. They now know whom to call with a problem (84%), are more comfortable calling someone from another library (75%), are more likely to call on ODL staff for assistance (69%) and to network with other librarians (69%). In addition, participants reported being more comfortable dealing with the public (73%), with their supervisors and administrators (70%), and with their library boards (53%). Increased networking opportunities and the benefit of sharing ideas were mentioned most frequently in focus group sessions as major impacts of the certification program, as well as increased activity in grant writing and increased confidence in making presentations for community groups.

I had to do a talk at the Head Start program a few weeks ago, and some of the statistics I learned in [an IPL class] helped me with my talk because I wasn’t aware that Oklahoma children were so behind other states. I don’t know if I would have gotten up and said anything in front of all of them before.

The majority of survey respondents (74%) indicated that the CPL program

| Independent Public Libraries with Staff Certified through the Institute | Libraries with One or More Certified Staff |
|---|---|---|
| Population Served | No. of Libraries | Libraries with One or More Certified Staff |
| No. % |
| More than 25,000 | 5 | 3 | 60 |
| 10,000–24,999 | 16 | 7 | 44 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 15 | 9 | 60 |
| 2,000–4,999 | 30 | 5 | 17 |
| Fewer than 2,000 | 38 | 7 | 18 |

| Public Libraries with One or More Staff Attending Institute Classes (Jan. 1, 1997–Feb. 2, 2001) | Libraries with One or More Staff Attending Classes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Population Served | No. of Libraries | Libraries with One or More Staff Attending Classes |
| No. % |
| More than 25,000 | 5 | 4 | 80 |
| 10,000–24,999 | 16 | 12 | 75 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 15 | 13 | 87 |
| 2,000–4,999 | 30 | 22 | 73 |
| Fewer than 2,000 | 38 | 29 | 76 |
Focus group participants reiterated the increase in job satisfaction and enthusiasm for the profession, but few felt that certification would have any impact on salary scales.

felt like outsiders.” While focus group participants echoed these positive perceptions when speaking of colleagues and peers, most felt that boards, city managers, and patrons were largely ignorant of the nature of certification, a problem of professional recognition that extends to the master’s degree as well. The profession’s failure to inform external constituencies of the nature of librarianship and the knowledge base necessary for excellent service is not limited to certification.

If you had your certificate hanging on the wall behind the circulation desk, I think it would show the patrons that come in that you were interested in your job and you pursued further education toward that end. And maybe they would have more respect for the library and the personnel.

Focus group participants reiterated the increase in job satisfaction and enthusiasm for the profession, but few felt that certification would have any impact on salary scales. Some felt that certification would carry more weight if it were required, while others did not feel mandatory certification would increase salaries. Opponents to mandatory certification asserted that they did not want to be in classes with people who were there under duress.

The impact on career may well be related to findings regarding perceptions of others. The respondents felt that as a result of the certification process others perceive them as more professional (78%) or as more knowledgeable (75%). ODL development consultants noted that noncertified librarians asked more basic procedural questions than those who had completed the institute. Members of the Public Library Directors Council noted that staff participation in the certification program “lifts their self-esteem and gives them better understanding of what we’re doing” and that participants “no longer felt like outsiders.” While focus group participants echoed these positive perceptions when speaking of colleagues and peers, most felt that boards, city managers, and patrons were largely ignorant of the nature of certification, a problem of professional recognition that extends to the master’s degree as well. The profession’s failure to inform external constituencies of the nature of librarianship and the knowledge base necessary for excellent service is not limited to certification.

If you had your certificate hanging on the wall behind the circulation desk, I think it would show the patrons that come in that you were interested in your job and you pursued further education toward that end. And maybe they would have more respect for the library and the personnel.

IPL appears to be a factor influencing plans for continuing education—35% of survey respondents plan to attend workshops and classes for purposes related to certification, whereas 75% plan to attend workshops and classes for purposes related to certification. Records indicate that nearly 90% of certified librarians renew their certificates by fulfilling continuing education requirements.

It is impressive that IPL has been incorporated into an overall plan for education and training within the state, and certification has clearly enhanced demand for continuing education opportunities. OLA continues to offer a variety of workshops, and the ODL certification specialist reports that “not counting certification, beyond my personal efforts. And it is a big help. And I think [certification] is paying off in that respect.”

The effect of the grants program on participation in professional associations is mixed. Of those responding to the survey, 36% had attended a conference before participation in IPL and 38% had never attended a conference. Of those participating in the survey, 40% have not yet joined a professional association, and only a small number joined without financial support (11%) or took a more active role in association activities (11%). Focus group responses suggest both institutional and personal barriers. Lack of money and staff may curtail the ability of smaller independent libraries to support association membership or conference attendance. In larger libraries and systems, conference travel funds are reserved primarily for higher-ranking or MLS librarians. Other barriers are personal and self-imposed. Some library managers are reluctant to spend family time or money on professional activities.

Those participants who have taken advantage of the conference and membership grants program have remarked on the broader understanding and practical knowledge gained from conferences and membership journals. Nevertheless, professional organizations at both the state and national levels continue to be viewed as continuing education providers rather than professional representatives who shape policy, and participants continue to view themselves as audience rather than policy makers or planners.

There is certainly evidence that participants are thinking more broadly about their roles and about the context of library service, regardless of their perceptions of professional associations. One consultant noted that “We had record attendance for the last legislative day. I think that’s directly attributable to certification.” The ODL certification specialist framed the changes from a long-term perspective: “It’s going to spread. People now know people at OLA. They were shy and didn’t meet people or speak to them [at conference]. This year a former institute participant is an OLA committee chair. It takes a while, but it’s making a difference. Six years is not a very long time to see that kind of change.”

Library Administration and Support

I really appreciate the opportunity to become certified. It not only
made me a better manager, it made me a better person. I understand how to do things better instead of just learning it by paper trail.

Perceived impact in any one area of administration is small, with planning (19%) being the most frequently cited area of change. But 73% of the respondents noted change in at least one category, and focus groups report better and more systematic planning, evaluation, and updating of library policies, improved staff relationships, and attention to staff development. Participants with greater management responsibility, chiefly those from smaller independent libraries, observed a greater impact on administrative processes than those who worked in larger systems and had less daily responsibility for administration.

Now we understand the importance of going about all the proper steps in order to take care of [planning an expansion]. Before I don’t think we probably would have been as organized about it, but now we know how to get a committee, stuff like that. . . . That’s why I said maybe before we might have even gone about it wrong, but having taken those classes you know the steps to take and everything to get this done.

The perceived impact on support for the library has also been small, whether in staff salaries (14%), benefits (0%), and working conditions (10%) or in collaboration with other agencies (19%), grant support (16%), or local funding (11%). However, for 46% of respondents, there was some perceived impact on support for the library, and as a Public Library Directors Council member predicted, it may be that “five years down the road there will be a snowball effect.”

Direct Service to the Library’s Constituents

I think there is a greater appreciation of the entire picture of what the libraries are all about, particularly issues of censorship or nondiscrimination and . . . confidentiality.

Respondents reported changes in direct services including expanded outreach programming, increased young adult programming, addition of baby lap-time story hours, creation of Web sites and initiation of Web services, more professional service, and need to improve collection access. Programming and Internet classes for patrons were the most frequently mentioned examples of expanded programming. One group from a small independent library explained that obtaining certification was part of their long-range plan to join a library system that requires the credential and thus to substantially broaden the services available to their patrons.

Focus-group participants were much more emphatic about the effect of the certification program and IPL classes on service philosophy, approaches, and qualitative impact. They evidenced a new appreciation for customer service and intellectual freedom principles.

And then the other thing that I have learned from the certification classes was that in my opinion there shouldn’t be a customer that comes into your library and doesn’t go away with a full glass of information, the information that he came to find. With the information that we have available through the computers, everybody should go away happy.

Impact

The certification program acts in a synergistic manner with other educational activities within the state, enhancing appreciation for continuing education, providing a strong foundation in basic skill areas, and allowing for more advanced and issue-oriented programs offered in other venues. The ODL certification specialist summarized the impact succinctly: “They’re networking . . . they’re learning . . . they’re getting a bigger perspective of library service.”

ODL sponsorship of educational activities demonstrates their importance, and some public library boards have responded with increased support for staff training and continuing education expenses.

IPL has had a significant impact on individual knowledge levels, self-concept, and service attitudes. Institute participants have an enhanced sense of professional community grounded in shared experience and leading to active support and a lively exchange of ideas. Individual growth has translated into direct improvement in library service to the state’s citizens.

A lot of people don’t look at library staff as professionals; I think we all should. It would be nice if everybody had a degree in library science, but we don’t. It’s a step in between, I think. It makes people think more professionally about their jobs and maybe take it more seriously.

CPL and IPL have had a positive impact on public library service in the state and have moved libraries toward Oklahoma’s LSTA long-range goal to “stimulate excellence and promote access to learning and information resources in all types of libraries of diverse geographic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and to people with limited literacy or information skills.” The structure and implementation of the programs hold the promise of continued progress toward excellence.

The themes that permeated the survey data and the focus groups—

- increased knowledge and confidence;
- increased contacts and networking with participants and institute instructors; and
- changes in attitude and delivery—

all suggest not only improved service in the short term at the local level but also a potential for change in the library community overall. The responsiveness of the certification board and the ODL certification specialist in the ongoing evaluation, revision, and implementation of design elements and new programs further support this interpretation. Of all the uses of LSTA funds during the four years considered in the evaluation of which this study was a part, one could argue that the investment in these related programs has been among the most effective in changing the overall quality of public library service, particularly in the small libraries of the state that constitute the great majority of delivery points for library service in Oklahoma.

Improving the Success of the Programs

While CPL, IPL, and CGP have unquestionably been successful in addressing some of the personnel challenges faced in a largely rural state with a high percentage of small public libraries serving limited population bases, there are some changes that could be made that might further enhance the overall impact. Summarized, these changes are requirement, recognition, and responsibility.

In the evaluation conducted, there was no clear consensus as to whether certification should be required. As reported above, some participants
strongly supported requiring certification, and others just as adamantly opposed it. However, the positive impact that certification has had argues for at least consideration of the possibility of moving, over time, toward linking qualification for state aid with having certified staff.

Less controversial, and supported by almost everyone involved in certification, is added recognition for those completing the certification program. A local event at which the ODL consultant or state librarian presents a framed certificate will draw attention to the recipient’s dedication. A well-publicized certificate presentation at a city council meeting emphasizes both the individual accomplishment and the significance to the community of certified library staff.

CGP, for a variety of reasons, has not had the impact it was intended to have. Redesigning the grants program to include local matching support could underscore the importance of local commitment and help make this program more effective.

Exporting the Oklahoma Experience: What Can Others Learn?

Currently, there are thirty-one states that have some form of certification for public librarians, of which twenty-three have mandatory certification for at least some categories of personnel. These certification programs vary in level and requirements, including some that incorporate all levels of staff, others that focus exclusively on staff without an MLS, and others that certify only MLS degreed librarians. The structure of the Oklahoma certification program is not unique, although it was designed and tailored specifically to meet the needs and conditions in the state.

Some programs in other states are similar to Oklahoma’s in providing basic skills education and knowledge for public library staff without formal LIS education. The Illinois State Library conducts an annual summer weeklong Institute for School and Public Librarians for those who work in small or medium-sized libraries. The Utah State Library conducts certification training in administration, cataloging, collection development, and reference for public library directors. The Nebraska Library Commission ties public librarian certification to a set of basic skills courses in administration, public services, organization of materials, and collection development, which are provided on a rotating basis. Idaho State Library’s Alternative Basic Library Education program, planned to migrate to online delivery, is also directed to non-MLS degreed library staff.

As these selected examples illustrate, other state libraries, particularly those in states with public libraries not directed by MLS librarians, are providing opportunities for staff to acquire the basic competencies and skills needed to work in public libraries. What elements make Oklahoma’s program successful that others might borrow and adapt to their own environment? Four key elements appear to be critical.

Teamwork

Joint development and oversight by the state library and the state library association are of major significance. This partnership has given the program strength beyond what could be accomplished by one agency alone, was important in gaining initial support of the professional community, and is helping to fold certification participants at all levels into the professional library community. Involvement of the professional community as instructors in the institute helps to maintain investment in and support for the overall program, preventing it from becoming viewed as a “state-library owned” effort. By sharing responsibility with the professional community in design, delivery, and oversight, the state library has fostered a comprehensive level of support and awareness throughout the Oklahoma public library community.

Accessibility

A second key element that has assisted in making the overall program successful in Oklahoma is accessibility of the institute classes. Spreading the classes throughout the year and making each class available each year in multiple, widely dispersive locations fits the needs of the target audience. The concentrated weeklong institute approach is nearly impossible for those in smaller independent libraries, necessitating closing the library for lack of staff. Offering classes online could provide some accessibility advantages, but participants value face-to-face interaction and the networking component that even the travel to and from classes in nearby towns cultivates.

Commitment

A third element important to the program’s success has been ODL’s commitment. By obligating LSTA funds to support the various aspects of the program, including a full-time professional position for program administration, the state library has demonstrated that it considers this effort critical to the long-term improvement of library services in Oklahoma. Given the limited resources of very small public libraries, providing the classes at no charge to participants is an important aspect. The voluntary nature of the certification program has made the program more acceptable and nonthreatening, although participant comments suggest it may be time to reconsider this policy.

Synergy

The fourth factor engendering success of the program is the manner in which it has been integrated with other efforts in the state. The certification program, institute, and grant program are among a variety of concurrent projects that have helped the very small libraries of the state provide more equitable information services. These efforts have included the LSTA-funded statewide information databases program and LSTA grants for various automation and Internet-access projects. Fortuitously, the state and federal universal service e-rate program and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation library program that provided computer hardware, software, technology training, and technical assistance for public libraries in low income areas in the state also occurred during this time period,
adding to the synergistic effect. The certification program provided a needed boost in human resource capacity to take advantage of the other efforts, and the availability of these other opportunities helped provide incentive for participation in the certification program and the related classes.

Conclusion

For Oklahoma, CPL and the related IPL and CGP have helped address the need for appropriately trained personnel for small public libraries and have also provided an ongoing avenue of planned, systematic training for staff of the larger public libraries. There are elements of this program that may be adaptable by other states, especially those with similar characteristics. Although there are enhancements to the programs that can make them even more successful than they have been, the integration of the programs into the organizational culture of the professional community of the state suggests that the long-term prospects for their continuation and increased level of success are good.

The research on which this article is based was supported by the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL) with Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds and was part of a larger evaluation of use of LSTA funding in Oklahoma, conducted by the two authors and other members of the faculty of the University of Oklahoma School of Library and Information Studies. The full evaluation report was made available by ODL at their Web site, www.odl.state.ok.us/lay/lsta/LSTA-Report.pdf.

The authors greatly appreciate the cooperation of all those who participated in the study and the assistance provided by ODL in the conduct of the work. All opinions expressed and conclusions drawn are those of the authors and do not represent the position of ODL.

References and Notes

1. The initial proposal for a state certification plan was approved by the ODL and OLA boards in the spring of 1993. Information on the background of the certification program is drawn from Oklahoma Department of Libraries, “Public Librarian Certification,” ODL Online at www.odl.state.ok.us/servlibs/certify.htm. There is some difference between the dates in this publication and that reported in the ODL board minutes of Aug. 24, 2001 (Oklahoma Department of Libraries, “ODL Board Minutes, Aug. 24, 2001,” ODL Online, accessed Sept. 4, 2002, www.odl.state.ok.us/agency/minutes/010824mn.htm.) The minutes report that the first certification occurred in July 1996 and that classes began August 1996.


4. See the ODL Web site for the current class topical outlines and objectives, www.odl.state.ok.us/servlibs/certman/certdixa.htm.


6. Ginny Dietrich, ODL certification specialist, provided all participation statistics.

7. ODL certification specialist, Ginny Dietrich, prepared the factual and statistical data provided by ODL. The authors gratefully acknowledge her contribution to our analysis.


Public Librarians Could Win Up to $500 for a Public Libraries Article

Feature articles published Public Libraries in 2003 will be eligible for two prizes—one of $500 and another of $300. Prizes will be awarded at the 2004 ALA Annual Conference.

Criteria for eligibility are:

- Author(s) must be a public library employee(s) at the time the manuscript is submitted.
- Articles written jointly by public library employees and others will also be considered.
- Articles must be published in 2003.
- Articles must be feature length (2,500–5,000 words).

“Verso,” “InterViews,” and “Perspectives” contributions will not be considered. Articles will be evaluated and awards made by members of the Public Libraries Advisory Committee.

The feature editor welcomes questions about topics for articles, but she cannot make commitments about publication without seeing the finished manuscript. For submission guidelines, visit www.pla.org or e-mail publiclibraries@aol.com.
Experiences of Early-Career Public Library Directors

Mary Pergander

Ten librarians of varied ages and backgrounds became public library directors within two years of obtaining their graduate degrees. Although half subsequently left to take nondirector positions, three have stayed in the same library more than twenty-five years, growing their libraries as their communities grow. Keys to early-career director success include mentoring by other directors, availability of library system expertise, careful assessment of the initial director opportunity, personal commitment to the work involved, adaptability, and a high energy level.

What do a twenty-three-year-old library school graduate and a librarian in her twenty-fifth year as library director have in common? They, and many others, became public library directors within two years of completing their library science graduate degrees.

After twenty years in hospital administration, I decided to go back to library school. Since I hoped to apply my management skills as a library director, I interviewed ten librarians who had become directors early in their careers. At the time of the interviews, they had been directors for one to thirty years, although they had all begun as early-career directors. In other words, a few of them had the benefit of significant professional hindsight, while others were still in the throes of the initial experience. There were also a few who were no longer directors and who shared the wisdom gained from that perspective as well.

I identified potential interviewees with the help of local library systems and through professional friends who spread the word. Electronic discussion list postings also resulted in some directors self-nominating. As the list of final interviewees demonstrates, respondents came from several geographic areas, although most were from the Midwest. There was also a deliberate attempt to have both men and women, with a range of ages and years of professional experience in the final group.

The interviews were conducted in person when geographically feasible and via e-mail when time was short or the distance was great. All interviews were based on the same survey tool, with interviewees free to add any comments or topics they desired. Some used this as an opportunity to reflect back on satisfying careers, and others seized the chance to vent. Some interviews took thirty minutes in person (or just a page or two in e-mail), while others went on for two hours (or many typed pages of comments).

Based in part on library leadership legends, I was assuming that most, if not all,

- entered their library professional careers with the goal of becoming a director;
- began in small public libraries, probably rural, as directors, and then moved on to larger libraries;
- found these directorships by looking for them; and
- began as adult reference librarians and moved into leadership roles.

However, every assumption was proven wrong! Admittedly, the interviews were conducted with only a small group, but the lessons are there for the taking.

Questions and Answers

Q: Was Becoming a Library Director a Career Goal for You Prior to Getting the Job?

Surprisingly, all but one person answered no! One commented that an instructor had “warned” her that students might find themselves in director positions after graduating. Two were recruited while still in graduate school, while others “fell” into director positions as the most convenient job to take. One noted that, if she agreed to take the offered director position, she would be able to walk to work—which was high on her priority list. “It was total serendipity,” said another. Two never even applied for the jobs they were offered!

What had been their original library career goals? The goals mentioned most often were academic reference librarian, children’s librarian, adult reference librarian, and young adult librarian.

Q: Did You Have Any Prior Library Experience?

Many of the directors had been involved in libraries in some capacity prior to or just after getting their degrees. This involvement ranged from being a library page in high school, to part- or full-time work at a public or
academic library, including stints at the reference desk while in library school. Their position titles included library system support staff, reference librarian, youth services librarian, library clerk, library practicum in a children’s department. Only one of those interviewed began her professional career in a school library.

Prior to getting their degrees, many of the soon-to-be-directors also worked in a variety of nonlibrary positions, including archivist, school teacher, lawyer, book-store manager, and corporate executive.

Q: In What Size Library Was Your Initial Directorship?
All accepted directorships in small libraries, most serving 2,000 to 9,000 patrons. In some, the director was the only professional employee. In others, professional staff members and other staff members numbered up to seven. Each director related that taking the leadership position without other management experience caused him or her to make people-related mistakes, which resulted in setbacks for the library. In fact, one referred to the “propensity for egregious mistakes” that newly minted directors have!

Burnout seems to have run high among the directors. “It took everything I had; it took everything out of me.” “I prayed every day for the strength to make it through the next day.” “I had no idea what I was getting into.” These were some of the comments they had about those first positions in management, so early in their careers and often without any prior management experience. Several directors left their top leadership positions and wouldn’t go back. Those who stayed on in management grew, reinvented themselves, and adjusted.

Q: From Whom Are You Learning? To Whom Do You Turn for Advice?
To whom do early-career public library directors turn for mentoring, advice, and support? Generally, these directors did not turn to their boards, although a few had board members who were experienced and able to guide them. Most of the directors developed close relationships with other area directors. “Other directors are definitely the key!” was a sentiment shared by most. However, this was not always easy to do. Several noted that it was difficult to break into established circles of library leaders. “Nobody helped me—there was no system and the other directors didn’t talk (to each other).”

Library systems, such as North Suburban Library System in Chicago’s northern suburbs, were mentioned repeatedly as providing the support, both professionally and personally, that

An enthusiastic few mentioned the following: obtaining this type of position early in their career meant the individuals had higher energy with which to tackle the job and the inevitable challenges.

Q: What Next Steps Do You Envision for Your Career?
The answers to this question vary more than for any other. Some of the directors interviewed are nearing the end of their professional careers, and others are still less than five years into their careers. One seasoned professional still interviews for other positions “just to keep my options open.” Most who are now long-term directors say they plan to stay where they are, but for three of them it is in part because they have grown good-sized, well-respected public libraries around them. That is, they have grown their library and their career simultaneously. Over time, with community and board support, their tiny libraries have matured into exemplary institutions. Such directors have the loyal, continuing support of their board and communities. Other directors have grown as leaders through positions in a succession of public libraries. Doing so, noted one director pursuing this path,
means “(I) know a good thing when I find it!”

The librarians who plan to work in libraries for several years to come are split regarding their futures. Half plan to continue as directors in other settings. The other half say they will leave (or they have already left) library leadership. The latter noted that, having been directors, they are now excellent support personnel, understanding the tough role and difficult decisions being made on a daily basis by their own directors, and ready to be supportive of their library leadership. One of these former early-career directors would someday like to get back into management but would do it more slowly and gain other experience first. Some are geographically limited to a particular place or region, with restricted choices as a result. Only one expressed plans to get a Ph.D. in library science.

Q: If You Had It to Do over Again, expressed plans to get a Ph.D. in library leadership. Only one

Restricted choices as a result. Only one

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Public Libraries on the Web
An Assessment of Services

Chandra Prabha and Raymond D. Irwin

Although public libraries have embraced the Web, benchmark data on the range of library services that public libraries offer on the Web are hard to find. This paper reports findings on public library Web services, excerpted from a three-part research project. Our study of 145 random U.S. and Canadian public library Web sites in 2002 shows that 70% provide access to library catalogs, 63% to licensed databases, 21% to interactive reference service, and 72% to Web collections. Libraries of different sizes differ in the range of services they offer.

Contradictory headlines about public library funding and the effect of the Internet on public library use make it difficult to gauge the impact of the Web on public library services across the U.S. and Canada. While some news stories report deep cuts in public library services, others note that funding for public libraries is up noticeably. Some research reports that the Internet has undercut the perception of public library value among users and potential users and that the Web is being used to justify library funding cuts, while other reports suggest that the Internet has actually increased the support for and use of public libraries.

Few would question that the Web has had an impact on public library collections and services. Since the invention of moveable type by Gutenberg, paper has been the preferred medium for publishing and distributing information. Over time, however, information resources have also appeared in a variety of other media—microfilm, phonographs, audio and video tape, CDs, DVDs, and, of course, electronic databases and the Web. Moreover, services such as reference assistance and lending of materials that previously had required users to come to the library are increasingly provided to users off-site. For libraries of all types, the Web has become, in recent years, both an important source of information and a vital medium for delivering information services.

A large number of public libraries provide Web access to information, from basic information like location and hours of operation to such services as library catalogs, licensed databases, and interactive reference assistance. The consulting of information sources and the lending of books, periodicals, and audiovisual materials—which had typically required users to come to the library—are now supplemented by the delivery of information to users wherever they are—dorm, home, lab, office—via the Web. Taking advantage of such library services without walking into the physical library is an experience that an increasing number of users expect—the “library without walls.”

Still, the extent to which North American public libraries use the Web to provide information services is unclear. What does the user see when entering a public library via the Web? What, if any, differences exist among public libraries of varying sizes in the provision of library services on the Web? A search of “Internet—Public libraries” in the Library Literature database in the summer of 2002 returned 701 hits. The bulk of work covers topics such as connectivity; access (e.g., the “digital divide”); filtering; virtual reference; legal, ethical, and social issues; library Web page design and services such as electronic catalog and database access. However, no systematic study has been undertaken to chronicle the extent or the variety of information services public libraries provide in the Web space. The purpose of our research is to fill this gap in the professional literature.

Research Questions

We sought to (1) measure Web access to public libraries; (2) describe public library services available in the Web space; and (3) characterize public library Web collections. These studies together were meant to produce baseline data on the visibility of public libraries on the Web in the United States and Canada.

The first study, which was concluded in the spring of 2002, focused on public libraries’ use of Web technology. Findings showed that most public libraries in the United States and Canada had a presence on the Web, that the percentage of libraries maintaining Web sites increased from 58% in February of 2001 to 77% in February of 2002, and that the size and development of library Web presences were related to the size of the populations that these libraries served.

Another study examined the characteristics of public library Web collections—domain, availability, ranking, and granularity. It also examined the types and presentation of resources in the Web collection.

The study reported in this article deals with public library services available on the Web. We gathered data on the provision of Web-accessible library services among North American public libraries.
To what extent are public libraries providing links to such essential library services as library catalogs and licensed databases?

To what extent are public libraries using the Web to provide reference services?

To what extent are public libraries engaged in selecting and creating links to Web resources?

Data

To address these questions, we identified and examined Web sites of public libraries of all sizes. We used a simple random sample of 200 records coded as “public library” in the American Library Directory (2000). Eleven of these entries did not meet the definition of a public library and were therefore removed. Branch libraries, for instance, as nonautonomous units, were excluded, as were libraries that derived most of their financial support from nonpublic sources.

The Web search engines AltaVista and Google were used to identify which of the sampled libraries had a “Web presence,” defined earlier as the existence of at least one official public library Web page describing its library services. A Web site was defined as a collection of interlinked Web pages at the same network location; a Web page was defined as a Web resource possibly with links embedded in it, which is rendered as a single unit of composite information. A Web page can also be referred to as a “Web site” when the library has just one Web page. In reporting our research we use “Web site” to refer occasionally to both a site and a page.

We also sought population data for the service areas of libraries that had a Web presence. The American Library Directory (2000) and the Public Library Data Service Statistical Report (2001) were consulted to gather this data. We used the population data to test statistically whether the size of population a public library served affected the range and extent of its services on the Web.

Findings

Of the 189 public libraries sampled, 145 (77%) had a Web presence in January 2002. Overall, the size of the population a public library served and a public library’s membership in a library system (local, county, regional, or state) seemed to influence whether a public library had a Web presence. A public library system is commonly viewed as pooling the talents and resources of a group of independent libraries, within a reasonable geographic area, for the purpose of extending and enhancing information services and resources in the interest of the users of all member libraries. In our study, Web sites of smaller libraries tended to be hosted as part of a library system.

We categorized the sampled public library Web sites based on the types of services and resources they offered: library catalogs, licensed databases, interactive reference services, and professionally selected Web resources. We also examined the organization of sites that provided professionally selected Web resources.

Malls, Strip Malls, and Store Fronts Describe Public Library Sites

We used a familiar metaphor to categorize public library Web presences: malls, strip malls, and store fronts. Libraries offering a wide range of services via the Web including library catalogs, licensed databases, interactive reference services, and professionally selected Web resources were termed malls. Examples include: Russell Public Library in Middletown, Connecticut (www.russelllibrary.org, see figure 1), the Des Plaines Public Library in Des Plaines, Illinois (www.nsn.org/dpkhome/dppl), and Naples Public Library in Naples, Maine (www.naples.lib.me.us/OutDefault.htm).

Fourteen percent of the Web sites could be likened to strip malls. For example, Ahira Hall Memorial Library in Brocton, New York (www.cclslib.org/brocton, see figure 2).

About one third of the Web pages (32%) could be called storefronts. The Blue Ridge Township Library in Mansfield, Illinois (www.ltis.org/mdn.html), the Cromwell Belden Public Library in Cromwell, Connecticut (www.cromwellct.com/library.htm), and the Western District Public Library in Orion, Illinois (www.rbls.lib.il.us/wtp, see figure 3), all serve as examples of library storefronts.

It is worth noting that strip-mall and store-front sites may offer access to other libraries’ Web-based services. In fact, some of the libraries in these categories linked to regional or state library sites offering union library catalogs and many databases and Web resources.

The sites of some smaller and medium-sized libraries fall into the mall...
Overall, however, the larger a public library, the more likely is its Web presence to be analogous to a shopping mall; conversely, the smaller the public library, the more likely is its presence to be similar to a storefront (see table 1). The library’s reported service population was a statistically significant factor.12

**Range of Public Library Services in the Web Space**

We found links to library catalogs, licensed databases, reference services, and professionally selected Web resources at many public library sites. Of the 145 public libraries, 70% provided access to their library catalogs; 63% facilitated access to licensed databases (e.g., EBSCO databases); 21% referred users to interactive reference service through the Web, and 69% presented e-mail addresses to contact librarians, perhaps also for the purpose of asking reference questions. Moreover, 72% of libraries presented professionally selected Web resources.13 (See figure 4.)

**Access to Public Library Catalogs and Licensed Databases**

Providing access to bibliographic descriptions of book and nonbook collections seems important to public libraries. Of the 102 libraries that provided access to their library catalogs, 35% hosted their catalogs independently; 65% did so through their library network.

Population data was available for 72 of the libraries that provided Web access to public catalogs. A Chi-square test revealed a statistically significant probability that libraries serving larger populations are more likely to provide Web access to library catalogs than are smaller libraries.14

A slightly smaller number of libraries offered database access to virtual visitors. Of the 91 public libraries that provided users Web access to licensed databases—usually through library card number authentication—68% did so through their library systems, while 30% appeared to offer access on their own. Two percent combined the two approaches. Again, smaller libraries typically made use of library systems to extend database access to Web users.

**Access to Search Engines and Reference Services**

Most public libraries also gave their site visitors an opportunity to seek out information from the public Web via search engines, directory sites, and links to a variety of content aggregators. Of the 105 libraries posting selected links, 58% directed users to an area on the site devoted specifically to search engines. In a similar vein, 96% pointed to large reference sites like the Internet Public Library, Librarians’ Index to the Internet, or statewide sites like the Michigan Electronic Library. Libraries that linked to search engines often selected resources that combined search engine and directory functions, such as Yahoo! and HotBot.

Explicit referral to interactive reference services was less common. Among the 145 libraries in the sample, 21% directed visitors to a special link to reference staff. Sixteen percent allowed visitors to ask questions by e-mail only, and 5% offered reference through some combination of chat and e-mail. Sixty-six percent did not overtly direct Web users to electronic reference service.15

**Access to and Presentation of Web Collections**

Seventy of the 105 libraries (67%) provided links to external Web resources from their Web sites; 27 (25%) referred visitors to links at the system level, and nine (8%) offered links at both the local library and the library system level. A statistical test showed that both large and small libraries provide access to Web resources.16 The way they go about it differs, however. Larger libraries seemed more likely to have their staff select and link to Web resources, while smaller libraries were more likely to rely upon staff at their library systems to select and link to Web resources.17

We also paid attention to public libraries’ arrangement of Web resources. Most libraries arranged their links topically, while a smaller proportion clustered the resource links by user group. The amount of organization varied by the library’s service population size.

**Clustering of Resources by Topic**

Public libraries tended to arrange resources by topic. Of the 105 libraries, 75% grouped their links under topical headings. For example, the Hicksville (N.Y.) Public Library (www.nassaulibrary.org/hicksv/sites/sites.html) provided 22 topical groupings, from health to tax law.

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**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Web Presence Characterized by Library Size</th>
<th>Population Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>% (n=145)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mall</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strip mall</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store front</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Twenty-six libraries (25%) did not group their links under such categories, choosing instead to list links to resources—usually limited in number—on a single page without an overt organizational scheme. Generally, though, libraries offered clear guides to information pertaining to daily life needs.

Clustering Links by Audience. Among the 105 libraries or library systems providing selected Web resources, 51 (49%) grouped links by audience (e.g., children, young adult, adult, seniors).

Hierarchy of Links. Many libraries’ hierarchy of links were well thought out. Approximately 29% subdivided groupings into multiple levels in a way similar to Yahoo! or Looksmart. The Cleveland Public Library’s “Link Library” presented seventeen resource groupings, from arts and entertainment to travel and tourism. Under each, the user had the option to narrow his or her search. Education, for example, was split into ten subcategories, including adult education, higher education, and the like; the external links then came under each.

About 46% of the 105 libraries used single-level categorization, meaning that they divided links into groups once. For example, Vienna Park Public Library in West Virginia offered 29 link categories (e.g., antiques, food, government) and then listed anywhere from five to fifty hyperlinks under each.

The amount of layering public libraries undertook also depended upon the library size. Larger libraries were more likely than smaller libraries to favor multiple levels of organization. Conversely, libraries serving smaller populations were more likely than large libraries to have no categorization scheme at all.

The Kent County Public Library in Chestertown, Maryland, presented a special case. Its selected Web resources were composed largely of Open Directory Project (www.dmoz.org) offerings. This was the only apparent example among the libraries in our sample of a library partnership with a non-library information provider to expand the scope of human-selected Web content. The Open Directory Project, for instance, conditionally licenses its entire catalog of links for free, making it a cost-effective alternative to a single library’s selection and maintenance of Web material.

Local Community Web Resources. Finally, given the importance of resources of local interest to public libraries, we looked for the presence of links to Web sites containing community information. We found that libraries were more likely to provide links to general reference tools than they were to local Web sites. Still, about 57% of public libraries selecting Web resources created a separate, distinct section of local links. The relatively lower number of links to such resources in some cases may, however, simply reflect the fact that such Web resources in many smaller communities do not yet exist.

Summary and Reflections

The research reported here, as noted before, represents one part of a three-part study to document the ways in which North American public libraries are using the Web to provide information services. The first part considered technical aspects of public libraries’ creating and sustaining Web presences; the present study addressed the matter of service delivery through the Web, and the third analyzed public library Web collections. Taken together, these studies should provide baseline data on public libraries’ use of the Web space, which
could influence the provision of services in the future to the growing number of off-site users.

Findings reported in this article show that public libraries in the United States and Canada, particularly those serving larger populations, are indeed providing a range of library services in the Web space. That over half of public libraries with a Web presence could be categorized as library malls underscores the impact of the Web. It also shows many libraries' readiness to take advantage of Web capabilities.

Public libraries have obviously invested in technology and staff training to provide off-site users with Web access to many of the information resources available to on-site visitors. Include the additional 14% characterized as strip malls, and nearly two-thirds of sampled libraries offered Web access to library services and collections. In short, many seem to be changing their “mix of services,” with special stress on communicating and delivering information via the Web.

Nearly two-thirds of public libraries offer access to licensed content and online information about local and regional physical libraries. A majority of libraries in the sample carefully arranged and categorized links to professionally selected Web resources. Many, especially among large libraries, have become gateways, offering links to search engines, directories, general reference sources, frequently requested everyday information, and local agencies and organizations, in addition to library catalogs and licensed databases (e.g., New York Public Library at www.nypl.org and New Orleans Public Library at http://nutrias.org). Moreover, several are beginning to adopt twenty-four-hour and real-time virtual reference services.

Many smaller, less well-funded public libraries are extending their resources on the Web by relying on county, regional, and state systems to host their pages and to provide users with access to catalogs and licensed databases, as well as professionally selected and organized Web links. The time-honored library tradition of pooling resources may become even more critical in the digital era as public libraries stretch already diminished budgets to provide a wider array of services to off-site users.

Clearly now is not the time for complacency. Several segments of the population view public libraries as traditional institutions with traditional services and programs. An Urban Libraries Council study notes that, in the long term, especially given the Web savvy and “connectedness” of young people, library use could decrease and a significant number of library users may actually stop using library services. Smaller, less well-funded libraries could be particularly vulnerable to such an outcome.

The often-discussed “digital divide” that exists among individuals of various socioeconomic groups is similarly reflected in the ability of libraries of different sizes and budgets to provide information services via the Web. On the whole, data on public library size seem to indicate—perhaps not surprisingly—that larger libraries provide more services on the Web than do smaller libraries. With the exception of the ability to contact library staff quickly and easily online, users of smaller libraries,
Public library history shows... that libraries have taken an active role in social movements. In the 1920s and 1930s, for example, public libraries championed the adult education movement. Today libraries can play a similar, but even more effective role in the digital world...
Plan to Attend PLA 2004—
The Best Conference for Public Librarians

Registration opens on September 1, 2003, for PLA’s tenth national conference, “PLA 2004.” Registration forms will automatically be mailed to PLA members and also will be available online at www.pla.org. PLA members receive substantial registration discounts—sign up today! The conference will be held February 24–28, 2004, in Seattle, Washington, and will feature close to 150 programs and talk tables, six pre-conferences, author and social events, nearly 800 booths in the exhibits hall and more! PLA conferences are focused exclusively on public libraries and public librarianship—you won’t want to miss this opportunity to hear how other libraries are managing and to contribute your own ideas to the ongoing dialogue. Visit www.pla.org for updates and more information.

PLA Election Results 2003

Please join PLA in congratulating our newly elected officers and board members. Thank you to all candidates who participated in the election, we appreciate your willingness to serve the organization. All terms began after the ALA 2003 Annual Conference.

- Vice-President/President-Elect
  Bohrer, Clara N.
- Issues and Concerns Cluster Steering Committee Member (three-year term)
  Sanders, Jan W.
  Crocker, Wayne M.
- Library Development Cluster Steering Committee Member (three-year term)
  Hamilton, Rita
  Stanke, Nicky
- Library Services Cluster Steering Committee Member (three-year term)
  Danczak Lyons, Karen
  Paynter, David M.

Adoption of Proposed Bylaws

The proposed bylaws change, which added the PLA Councilor to the PLA Executive Committee, passed.

Public Library Data Service News

PLDS 2003 Available

The Public Library Data Service (PLDS) Statistical Report is now available for purchase. Since 1988 PLDS has collected data from American public libraries on financial information, library resources and per capita measures, annual use figures, technology, circulation, and more. This year’s report uses data collected from more than one thousand public libraries. The 2003 PLDS Statistical Report (ISBN 0-8389-8223-9) is $80 per copy list price; ALA and PLA members are eligible for discounts. For more information about the PLDS project, please phone the PLA office, 1-800-545-2433, ext. PLA. To place an order call, ALA’s order department at 1-866-Shop ALA (1-866-746-7252).

Public Library Data Service Custom Searching

Need quick, accurate information on how your library compares to other North American libraries? The Public Library Data Service (PLDS) Custom Search has your answers! All of the information currently in the database (1988–2002) is available to you. The basic fee is $65 for PLDS participants, $120 for nonparticipants. This fee covers consultation with the client, approximately one hour of data analysis, and preparation of a tabular or graphic report. For projects requiring work beyond this, additional time will be billed at an hourly rate of $40 for PLDS participants and $80 for nonparticipants. A not-to-exceed estimate can be given to the client before work begins if additional work will be required. Fax or overnight delivery services will involve additional charges. To order your PLDS Custom Search, contact the University of Illinois, Library Research Center, (217) 333-1980.

Bibliostat Connect

Visit Bibliostat Connect (www.informata.com), a customizable database of library statistics drawn from information in the PLDS report, the Federal State Cooperative System, and each state’s own annual statistical report. This annual publication provides invaluable quantitative information on library finances, salaries, output measures, and related topics.
Neal-Schuman Electronic Classroom Handbook


The Neal-Schuman Electronic Classroom Handbook describes how to build a bibliographic instruction electronic classroom for an academic library, from organizing a committee, to exploring the idea, to managing the classroom once it is built. Nearly everything librarians need to know during the building process, from estimating and defending the costs of the project to what types of flooring should be installed, can be found in this book.

Hinchliffe writes in the introduction that she designed the book to be a practical planning guide that people can use while they are going through the classroom building process. She creates a hands-on approach by providing copies of planning worksheets throughout the book for readers to use. Downloadable copies of some of the worksheets are also available at www.neal-schuman.com/eclassroom.html. Even if the construction of an electronic classroom is not a current operation, the instructor workstation equipment, instruction session intake form, and log book page worksheets would be useful to librarians who teach technology courses.

The book is arranged into three main parts: preparation and planning, design and construction, and day-to-day operations. Highlights of the book for public librarians are the examples of classroom layouts, with pros and cons of each design and illustrations to help the reader visualize the layout; the chapter on infrastructure, which includes a discussion about wireless network access and practical suggestions about the number of electrical outlets needed in the classroom; an explanation of the construction bidding process; and the appendixes at the end of the book. Appendix B, “Laws, Codes, Regulations, and Guidelines,” and appendix C, “Directory of Suppliers,” are comprehensive, and appendix G includes a public library case study that explores some of the problems unique to public libraries, such as having furniture that will not move. All the ideas presented in the book can be adapted for public libraries. The book is well-written, exhaustive, and easy-to-use book, combining information that otherwise would have to be found in several other sources. Public libraries looking to build should first review a copy through interlibrary loan before purchasing.—Julie Elliott, Reference Librarian, Goshen (Ind.) Public Library

101+ Teen Programs That Work (Teens @ the Library Series)


Offering teen programs is a great way to get that elusive age group into the library and show them that the library is about more than homework. 101+ Teen Programs That Work offers creative yet realistic ideas for any size library. In addition, other programming elements that are important but often neglected, such as publicity and recordkeeping, are emphasized.

A very strong aspect of this title is that it allows for different levels of programming, which makes this useful for school media centers as well as public libraries, though the emphasis is on what the author has done at her public library. Ideas are grouped by Dewey number as well as by calendar, and ideas for obtaining teen input as well as selling ideas to the administration are provided.

Chapter groupings are very useful, covering any kind of teen programming a library would want or need. They include summer reading programs (with several different theme ideas), scavenger hunts, programs for teens and parents, and teen volunteering. Basic programming questions, such as how to begin and maintain a teen advisory board, are covered in detail. Instructions are given for such popular activities as science fair help days or college knowledge nights. Simple contests up through elaborate theme parties are outlined as well.

The price tag on this volume of the “Teens @ the Library” series may give some libraries pause, but this book offers great value for the price. In addition to tested program ideas, variations, price estimates, and tips for connecting the program to the collection are provided. A companion Web site even offers readers updated information.

Both libraries beginning teen services as well as those with established programs will find fun and practical information in this excellent title.—Amy Alessio, Teen Coordinator, Schaumburg Township (Ill.) District Library

Teaching Technology A How-to-Do-It Manual for Librarians


Brandt’s Teaching Technology covers using instructional systems design (ISD) to design, teach, and evaluate information
technology tutorials, workshops, and classes.

The book is divided into three main sections. The first part deals with using ISD to design and plan a course, with the author devoting a chapter to each of ISD’s five steps: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (ADDIE). In the second part, the author discusses how to build a successful program, highlighting currently successful programs (such as those at the New York Public Library), providing contact information for the libraries, and sharing what type of training each library offers. The third part includes sample materials, such as an instruction guide for a one-hour lecture on searching indexes and a syllabus from an information literacy course from current technology training programs in academic and public libraries.

In the chapters on ADDIE, the author gives some excellent advice to librarians planning to teach technology courses. Brandt’s chapter on implementation emphasizes the importance of backup plans and how to deal with some of the unexpected glitches that can occur when working with technology. The chapter on making the program work is also filled with practical advice on topics that can be too easily forgotten, such as promoting and marketing a course.

One weakness in the book is Brandt’s introduction to ISD and ADDIE. The level of analysis and planning in the process seems excessive. Brandt suggests in the introduction that readers read through the book carefully, taking the time to go through the ADDIE formula thoroughly. Each of the first seven chapters ends with a “review template”: a lengthy set of homework questions to inspire and assist the reader in implementing the program. This may discourage librarians who cannot make the time commitment.

Readers who are not already fans of this fairly structured system will not be converted by this book, which is a shame, because there is much here to be learned. Brandt consistently makes good use of examples to illustrate his points and his advice on presentation format and styles is encouraging. The detailed information on successful technology programs at public, academic, and special libraries is instructive. However, librarians with an aversion to ISD should not purchase this book.—Julie Elliott, Reference Librarian, Goshen (Ind.) Public Library

Neal-Schuman Library Technology Companion
A Basic Guide for Library Staff

In the opening chapter of this primer on electronic technologies, Burke demonstrates that the shift to these resources represents continuity with, rather than departure from, the library’s traditional aims. He argues, in fact, that the library itself is an evolving technology for storing and sharing information. The 1791 invention of the card catalog, for example, created the first end-user searching tool. The Internet exists in part because of librarians, who continue as they always have to adapt new technologies to the information retrieval needs of an increasingly techno-savvy public.

Burke’s purpose is to give library students and staff unfamiliar with the technology a simple yet comprehensive outline of the terminology, mechanics, and underlying principles of computer-based information systems. Since those who create, manage, or work with such systems will need more detailed knowledge, Burke begins with pointers for researching technology and an annotated bibliography of print and online sources. The remainder of the book is divided between descriptions of the major technologies (chapters three through ten) and advice about planning for, acquiring, and maintaining such resources (chapters eleven through sixteen). There is also a thorough glossary.

The descriptive chapters start with the components of computer workstations and proceed through library automation systems, networking, the Internet, CD-ROM and online library resources, digital information storage, adaptive and assistive technology, and distance education and presentation technologies. Each chapter explains terms, standard measurement units, and minimum desirable system specifications. The systems chapter includes eleven key questions to consider before making purchases.

The advisory chapters cover planning for a system, designing an adequate environment, evaluating and buying, protecting hardware and software, and troubleshooting. Burke actually presents these topics in roughly reverse order, presumably because his targeted readers are most likely to begin learning with existing systems before they advance to broader responsibilities. The approach works well. For example, the troubleshooting chapter focuses on fixes a nontechnical staff person can accomplish, offering both strategies for learning the details and specific practical tips.

continued on page 266
NISO Publishes Guide to Standards for Integrated Library Systems

The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) announced the publication of The RFP Writer’s Guide to Standards for Library Systems, a manual intended to aid librarians who write requests for proposal (RFP) for integrated library systems. This guide is intended to help them understand the relevant standards and determine a software product’s compliance with standards.

The RFP Writer’s Guide to Standards for Library Systems identifies critical standards in the areas of bibliographic formats, record structure, character sets, exchange media, serials identifiers, binding, circulation protocols, bar codes, interlibrary loan, electronic documents, electronic data interchange, information retrieval, metadata, and Web access. For each standard, the change, information retrieval, metadata, electronic documents, electronic data interchange, and Web access are described, and applicability to libraries is discussed, sample RFP language is provided, and compliance assessment issues are discussed.

Copies of the guide are available in print from NISO Press or for free download from NISO’s Web site. www.niso.org

CIVIC Technologies Announces Launch of LibraryDecision Software

CIVIC Technologies announced that its flagship product, LibraryDecision, went live online February 24, 2003. This new product is an Internet-based software application that utilizes geographic information systems (GIS) to analyze and visualize the relationships between library district resources and community needs in order to deliver more effective public library services.

LibraryDecision is a decision-making solution that provides analytical and interpretive insights into the unique characteristics of library districts and their individual branches. It combines Census 2000 data with a library district’s outlet and management data—circulation, collections, facilities, seating, computers, and more—to help library staff manage library services to user needs, reallocate resources, and plan for new facilities, among other features. This product is offered on an annual subscription. Solutions are available for single outlets, multibranch systems, consortium, cooperative, and state libraries.

www.civictecnologies.com

Horizon Reciprocal Borrowing

Dynix recently announced Horizon Reciprocal Borrowing, a new ASP service that allows in-person interlibrary loans across a variety of vendors’ systems by means of the new National Information Standards Organization Circulation Interchange Protocol (NCIP) standard. In addition, third-party text-based integrated library systems (ILS) that do not provide NCIP are supported through sophisticated screen-scraping technology.

To meet the demand of users who draw upon the resources of multiple libraries, this product enables libraries with reciprocal borrowing agreements to authenticate visiting users in real-time, discovering their current status regarding blocks, fines owed, and expiration dates. Once a visiting user is authenticated, staff can use local patron types to add the user to the local database as either a temporary, one-time user or as a bar-coded, permanent user, all with a single keystroke. Horizon Reciprocal Borrowing promises to deliver cost savings to all libraries that provide interlibrary loan services. It is the first solution of its kind in the industry.

www.dynix.com

eBook Companies Team Up to Provide Digital Lending to Small to Mid-Sized Libraries

OverDrive and Fictionwise have formed an alliance to provide affordable eBook lending solutions to small and independent libraries. Under terms of the agreement, OverDrive will provide premium content and digital rights management services to Fictionwise for use in their Libwise product. Patrons of libraries using Libwise will be able to download eBooks to either a PC or any popular handheld device, and even some cell phones. The agreement also includes a co-marketing alliance between the two companies to reach the library market.

Steve Potash, CEO of OverDrive said, “Fictionwise has developed a very cost effective product that makes it practical for any size library to establish a full-featured eBook lending site packed with thousands of best-selling titles from OverDrive’s Content Reserve. The OverDrive-Fictionwise alliance will extend thousands of best-selling ebooks titles and leading digital rights management technology further into the library marketplace.”

www.libwise.com

Sirsi Opens the Door with Sirsi Rooms Context Management Solutions

Sirsi Corporation announced the company’s new Sirsi Rooms Context Management Solution. Sirsi Rooms is a suite of products and services that will empower libraries to develop and present focused, dynamic collections, or “rooms,” of high-quality information, no matter what the source of the information. No special programming or other technical expertise is required by librarians to use Sirsi Rooms, and it is totally interoperable with other systems in use by libraries.

In its first release, Sirsi Rooms includes server software, servers-building software, and prepackaged rooms. The Sirsi Rooms Server software, based on Java and XML, features functionality for OpenURL resolution, automatic presenta-
tion of content, and content usage logging. Powerful search functions include capabilities for broadcast searching and conducting searches from pre-defined queries, plus context-sensitive searching. The Sirsi Rooms Builder software enables libraries to build their own unique rooms or to customize predesigned rooms. Sirsi Rooms Blueprints are predesigned rooms that are focused by subject, audience, or purpose. They can be used as delivered or customized to meet unique needs.

www.sirsi.com

WebFeat 2 Technology Helps Libraries Track Database Usage

WebFeat announced the release of its new WebFeat 2 technology that enables libraries to capture and report usage statistics from any or all of a library’s native database interfaces. These statistics may be reported through WebFeat’s Usage Tracker (WUT) in addition to usage captured through the WebFeat Knowledge Prism search engine.

For every database used, WebFeat 2 captures and reports the number of queries, number of full-record (full-text) requests, number of next-set requests, search strings (with Boolean operators), and date and time stamp information. WebFeat 2 can also track usage by individual library, branch, and remote users. Reports are available through the Web, which can be emailed or downloaded into spreadsheets or other database management programs.

WebFeat 2 is available now for all new WebFeat systems and can be integrated into existing WebFeat systems.

www.Webfeat.org

TLC Introduces Online Selection Assistant

The Library Corporation (TLC) has created the Online Selection Assistant, a materials management and collection development service that is vendor-neutral. Features include selection list management; fund management and accounting; electronic ordering and fulfillment; invoice approval; and receiving.

Using this new product, collection development librarians can access comprehensive lists of forthcoming and published materials, book and awards lists, and featured articles and reviews as well as connections to information and suppliers worldwide. The Online Selection Assistant also offers an integrated search of the local database, existing on-order and in-process selection items, popular vendor databases, and bibliographic utilities.

www.OnlineSelectionAssistant.com

The Content Café Makes Enriched Bibliographic Content Available to More Libraries

Both Dynix and Gaylord Information Systems have announced that they are teaming with Baker and Taylor to provide users with enriched bibliographic content as they search library resources. Through these partnerships Dynix customers using Horizon Information Portal (formerly iPac) and Polaris customers using PowerPac 3.0 will have access to The Content Café from Baker and Taylor.

The Content Café is a comprehensive database of enriched content, including more than one million ISBNs with book jacket images, nearly 400,000 with tables of contents, 746,000 with annotations, and approximately 150,000 with full-text reviews. Many of these review sources are archived as far back as 1987. The Content Café was created by Baker and Taylor and includes content from a variety of sources, including book reviews, article abstracts, and publisher blurbs.
Café also includes jacket images for CD, VHS, and DVD formats.

www.dynix.com
www.gis.gaylord.com

Now Searchable Online: Readers’ Guide Coverage Back to 1890

The entire retrospective content of Readers’ Guide to Periodical Literature is now searchable online via WilsonWeb. The database delivers nearly three million citations from some five hundred leading United States magazines, representing:

■ reporting on historical events from the perspective of when they happened;
■ interviews and profiles of a century of headliners and history makers;
■ contemporaneous criticism of works of art, literature, film, and stage; and
■ notes of illustrations, photos, charts, and other graphics accompanying articles.

Readers’ Guide Retrospective offers versatile searching by keyword, subject heading, dates, journal, author, article title, ISSN, and article type. Updated subject headings allow searching using familiar, contemporary terms, while original subject headings, also provided, offer a revealing and historically valuable look at the way issues of the day were framed.

The database also includes:

■ a library holdings indicator, linked to the library’s OPAC, that will let users know if they’ll find cited articles on the shelves;
■ links to citations with full text from other open-URL compatible databases; and
■ built-in interlibrary loan and document-delivery links.

www.heuwilson.com

Brodart Automation Launches DartClix 4 Kids

Brodart Company’s Automation Division has introduced DartClix 4 Kids, an offshoot of the company’s DartClix subscription service, which provides professionally selected and cataloged Web sites that can be imported directly into a library’s existing bibliographic file and viewed in the online public access catalog (OPAC).

With DartClix 4 Kids, subscribers receive a backlist of more than 2,400 records and approximately 100 new Web sites each month. DartClix 4 Kids records are selected by library professionals, ensuring subscribers will receive only high-quality, information-rich Web sites. DartClix 4 Kids enables students and patrons to access age-appropriate Web sites when searching their library’s OPAC without performing time-consuming searches via the Internet. Students and patrons can go directly from the OPAC to the Web site by clicking on the URL in the MARC record.

www.brodart.com/automation/index.htm

Link Resolver Service Unveiled by EBSCO

LinkSource is a unique link resolver that offers a solution to the challenge of integrating multiple electronic collections hosted on a variety of different systems.

LinkSource is an OpenURL-compliant resolver designed specifically to allow libraries to provide bidirectional, item-level linking to a wide range of online information resources from a single link menu. LinkSource has many linking partnerships in place, and EBSCO is working to establish partnerships with additional vendors to ensure linking accuracy.

www.linkresolver.com

Running a Successful Library Card Campaign: A How-to-Do-It Manual for Librarians


Librarians have many good reasons to think about heightening positive visibility to the community and potential voters, not the least of which is today’s troubled economy. Running a Successful Library Card Campaign is an energizing guide to helping public libraries of every size attract both new and lapsed patrons.

Jones discusses in detailed steps the model Houston Power Card Challenge, begun when Houston mayor Lee B. Brown told the city in his inaugural speech that he wanted all children to get a library card. The Houston Public Library addressed this challenge, signing up more than 203,000 children for library cards and increasing the circulation of juvenile materials. That initiative was developed through partners and a creative PR campaign. Each step of this inspiring story is outlined in this manual in a format that is easily reproducible, including a section of handouts.

Thirteen other major library systems and many smaller libraries that had successful card drives are featured. A useful feature of this book is an analysis of what made each campaign successful. The “what works and why” approach makes this title valuable on many levels.

Many library systems may not be able to mount a major campaign, but this book is still important as it gives concrete ideas on how to partner with schools and other agencies for funding. Public relations ideas from staff promotion days to getting ads all over the community could be applied to many kinds of initiatives. Jones illustrates how the success of the Houston Power Card Challenge showed city officials that the community supported the library. Then those officials approved a new central building and other improvements to the library system. No public library has a definite future, and most could certainly use measurable demonstrations of public support!

The “Alphabet of Best Practices” chapter makes a goal of reaching thousands of new cardholders seem easily attainable. The incentives and activities listed to help achieve this goal also seem fun. This title is highly recommended for all public libraries.—Amy Alessio, Teen Coordinator, Schaumburg Township (Ill.) District Library